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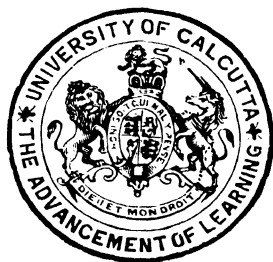
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## ASPECTS OF BENGALI SOCIETY

ASPECTS OF BENGALI SOCIETY  
FROM  
OLD BENGALI LITERATURE

BY  
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To

The sacred memory of  
SIR ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE



## PREFACE

The following pages embody the results of my research for the last ten years in the field of Old Bengali Literature—mainly based on unpublished records to be found in the library of Old Bengali manuscripts attached to the Calcutta University. The collection is a pretty large one, as up to now we have more than eight thousand copies of them in the library mainly comprising works transcribed by copyists from the 16th to the 18th century, many of which have not yet seen the light. There is another collection of this kind in the library of the Bangiya Sāhitya Pariṣat which contains about four thousand manuscripts, and it should be stated here that the figures in both the cases do not represent the actual number of books written by different authors, but there are often to be found amongst these several versions of the same work. I had a ready access to both the libraries and having obtained my M.A. degree in History in 1918 and again in Indian Vernaculars in 1920, I applied myself with an enthusiastic devotion to literary and historical pursuits in this virgin field of old Bengali literature, investigating mainly the social conditions of Bengal as reflected therein. An unexpected opportunity for this interesting study presented itself to me when in 1921 the late Sir Asutosh Mookerjee employed me as a Research Scholar in the Department of Indian Vernaculars. The task I was called upon to perform related to a critical examination of the references and allusions in the Bengali Classics to social life, customs and manners, trade and commerce, ship-building, culinary art, agriculture, architecture, and other activities of the

Bengali people together with a study of birds, beasts and the weather conditions of the country. Though as a source of historical information, its importance was undoubted, the field had not yet been adequately explored. It was felt that for the purpose of constructing a comprehensive history of Bengal these manuscripts should be collated and scientifically studied. We have not yet got any good history of Bengal as attempts in that direction have been confined mostly to a study of the records of warfare and conquest left by Moslem scholars and a few inscriptions of the Hindu kings. The vernaculars of India are a store-house of information regarding the progressive culture and social life of the people of different Provinces of this great country.

They have not yet received the attention they deserve, and the old Bengali literature particularly has a quite unique treasure of historical materials though they are largely intermixed with mythical and legendary elements. I have taken great pains to thresh grain from the chaff and give a connected narrative of the different subjects treated in this thesis. As Ramtanu Lahiri Research Assistant, I had to submit my quarterly reports to the President of the Post-Graduate Council in Arts, through Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen, whose devotion to the cause of Bengali literature is well-known. I waded through a vast body of old manuscripts with the help of his guidance and valuable suggestions. I have also acquired a knowledge of Bengali calligraphy of the different epochs of our history, but as in many places the manuscripts were found worm-eaten or otherwise damaged, I met with great difficulties in deciphering the letters and ascertaining the proper readings. But with a sincere zeal for the work that I had taken up, I not only proceeded in my studies steadily with courage and patience, but with a view to obtain a first-hand knowledge of the manners and customs of our people, I took excursions in the interior of the country

from time to time. This was essentially necessary, as in a rigidly conservative country like India, social conditions and ways of living as depicted in old records, are found still lingering, though in slightly altered forms, in remote villages. Most of the specimens of various artistic things, of which illustrations have been given in this thesis, *viz.*, instrument of music, ornaments, weapons, etc., were found, on a close search, preserved in different places such as archives of old Bengali mansions and the houses of village gentry, agreeing with the accounts furnished in the old Bengali literature.

The writer may humbly lay his claims to recognition for the immense pains that his arduous task has involved and also to some credit for originality as many facts relating to the old history of Bengal have been brought to light by him for the first time. The writer has also tried to study his subject from a comparative standpoint and cited illustrations of similar customs and manners prevailing outside India.

English translations to the Bengali text, quoted and referred to as authority, have been appended in each case in copious foot-notes. As the manuscripts have been mostly catalogued, it will be easy for any inquisitive scholar to have access to the two recognised libraries of Calcutta already mentioned.

Other details connected with the scheme of this thesis, will be found in the Introduction.

In conclusion, I take the liberty of conveying my thanks to those who have directly or indirectly helped me in the compilation and publication of this work. To-day my thoughts turn back to Bengal's great son, the late Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, with regret that he who imposed upon me the task and inspired me to undertake it, is no more, now that the task is accomplished and my work has seen the light of day. My best thanks are especially due to

Mr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, M.A., B.L., Barrister-at-Law, M.L.C., the present Vice-Chancellor, whose never-failing encouragement it has been my privilege to receive. I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Dineshchandra Sen, B.A., D.Litt., the benefit of whose help I enjoyed throughout as I worked under him in the University at the time. I take this opportunity of thanking Prof. Sylvain Levi, D.Litt., who has always taken a stimulating interest in the progress of my researches. I am also grateful to Prof. Benimadhab Barua, M.A., D.Lit., who has helped me in more ways than one, and Mr. Jogeschandra Chakravorti, M.A., Registrar, for rendering an invaluable help in the matter of expediting the publication of my work. Finally I thank the staff of the Calcutta University Press and especially Mr. Atulchandra Ghatak, M.A., Superintendent, for the personal interest he evinced during the printing of the book and Mr. Raicharan Das, B.A., for his intelligent help.

CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

*7th April, 1935*

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T. C. DAS GUPTA

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As regards the sources of illustrations I refer to my preface, p. ix. Besides, in order to describe in detail, I should mention that as regards ship No. I (Mayurpankhi with one or more decks) it is to be seen even now in Udayapur State (Rajputana). Both Nos. I and II (Mayurpankhi and Sukapankhi boats) are to be seen occasionally plying in the rivers of Dacca and Mymensingh districts of Bengal, as pleasure-boats by fashionable people. Vessel No. III, of course, is a reproduction from the original picture taken in Borobudur temple of Java. Illustrations Nos. IV, V and VI are taken from the photos collected by my friend Mr. Asutosh Chowdhury of Chittagong. He was a Bengali Ballad-collector and served under Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen. These vessels are chiefly to be seen in Backergunj and Chittagong districts.

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I owe to my artist friend and colleague, Mr. Biswapati Chowdhury, M.A., the illustrations planned by me for the work.

## INTRODUCTION

Considerable materials regarding the social, political and religious history of Bengal lie strewn over the pages of old Bengali literature. The administrative history of Bengal during the Mahomedan rule as also of the period immediately preceding it, gleaned from the accounts of the Mahomedan historians and copper-plate inscriptions, does not give us sufficient information about the social life of Bengal. The accounts to be found in these records are, moreover, often full of high-flown panegyrics, bestowed lavishly by the writers on their patrons, the Rājās, whose cause they avowedly espoused. The court-parasites have oftentimes given accounts of things which may, at best, be taken as half-truths, and unfortunately the historian of Indian life and culture has, at the present day, to depend mainly on these materials, which are quite inadequate for historical purposes.

In the old Vernacular literature, the reader is carried through a jungle of legends, mythical stories and crude rustic fiction which are apparently far from being reliable materials for history.

But a closer observation reveals that this literature of legends and imaginary stories often bears the throbbings of life, and in this crude performance one can feel the pulse of the people,—their ideas and inspirations, their manners and customs, sometimes with a greater accuracy than in the State-records or inscriptions. Underlying these legends there is life with all its lights and shades. In these accounts the eyes of a true historian will discover precious

materials which, supplemented by official records, the great value of which cannot be ignored, will enable him to reconstruct the social and political history of the country on the solid basis of a true scholarly research.

In the works like the *Dharmamaṅgal*, the *Chandīmaṅgal*, the *Manasāmaṅgal*, the *Sūnya Purāṇ*, the *Gorakṣavijay*, the *Sivāyanas* and the *Mymensingh Ballads*,—the poets sometimes derive the subjects of their treatment from actual facts, and though much of their accounts may be found tinged with poetic colourings, there cannot be any interested advocacy for a political cause, clouding their vision. The historical plays of Shakespeare give us far better glimpses into the social and political epochs of the English people than the voluminous accounts on the subject left by the historians.

This is more or less true in regard to our Vernacular poems also. The difficulty that confronts us in the field is the task of separating facts from fiction. All that is wanted, therefore, is a historian's critical judgment capable of distinguishing truth from fiction and of arriving at a scientific conclusion.

It is not possible, in many cases, to assign exact dates for want of materials, as also for the remoteness of the period to which the incidents relate.

But time may come when all available materials might be arranged in a chronological order; but it would now be quite premature to make any attempt in this direction.

Periods may now be generally considered in two main divisions, namely, Pre-Mahomedan and Mahomedan. The poets, though most of them belonged to the latter period, sometimes left accounts of facts which may be distinctly traced to the Hindu Epoch. The works treated of, in the following pages, roughly cover a few centuries—possibly those between the 10th and the 18th centuries. Of this

period the last three centuries were most prolific in producing a large mass of literary materials.

In dealing with the social and other problems of Bengali life, materials for which have been mainly gathered from old Bengali literature, attempt has been made to follow the above principle in respect of chronology.

The subject-matter has been divided into several chapters, as shown below :

- |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) Manners and Customs.           | (9) Hindu-Moslem Unity.      |
| (2) Ship-building and<br>Commerce. | (10) Architecture.           |
| (3) Costumes.                      | (11) Religion.               |
| (4) Ornaments.                     | (12) Education.              |
| (5) Culinary Art.                  | (13) Castes and Professions. |
| (6) Pastimes.                      | (14) Agriculture.            |
| (7) Warfare.                       | (15) Economic Condition.     |
| (8) War-music.                     | (16) Birds.                  |

Each of the subjects mentioned here tells something new and, as such, requires careful study. These items are but a few of the many, each of which, in view of the special importance attaching to it, deserves elaborate treatment.

The manners and customs prevailing in the country during the period under review were most peculiar, disclosing an admixture of foreign elements in them. Examples are not rare to show the prevalence of many non-Hindu manners and customs in the country in bygone ages. Thus, when a daughter was given in marriage to a young man, her sister or sisters were also given to him as dowry together with a number of maid-servants. This we find in the case of Adunā and Padunā, the two daughters of a certain Rājā, in the Māṇik Chandra Rājār Gān, evidently composed before the Mahomedan domination. Another custom, namely, that of trial by ordeal, was peculiar, and may be supposed to be an outcome of Buddhistic influences, though parallel

cases may be found in the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. This custom had a striking similarity with a similar practice prevalent among the Anglo-Saxons of England prior to the Norman conquest. The Mayanāmatī songs, the Chaṇḍī-kāvya, the Dharmamaṅgal poems and the Manasāmaṅgal poems are full of these trials by ordeals.

The custom of keeping a written document (Jayapatra) from a husband, going abroad for a long period on trade purposes, by his wife under certain circumstances, was most peculiar. This was done to save the wife giving birth to a child during the absence of her husband (generally a merchant) from calumny. Dhanapati, the merchant of the Chaṇḍīkāvya story, is said to have executed such a document in favour of his wife and we have reason to believe that it was held perfectly legal in the Law Courts in those days. This throws a flood of light on ancient ways of life and points to an age when a wife was not under the complete subjugation of her husband, as in later days. The spirit of free love, free movements, and self-culture among women, as found in the recently discovered East Bengal ballads, speak of an age quite different from the one that followed.

The keeping of trained dogs by the rich and giving them names show that they were once not regarded as un-touchables. In the Mayanāmatī songs we learn that Rājā Govindachandra kept trained dogs, named them and made necessary arrangements for their comfort. The songs, composed before the advent of the Mahomedans into this country, refer to a period when society was not influenced by orthodox Hinduism of later days.

That the merchants in the past enjoyed a status equal to that of the king is sufficiently illustrated in the Manasāmaṅgal poems and the Chaṇḍīkāvya. Why and how they came to lose this exalted position require careful investigation. Baṇsīdās, the celebrated poet of Manasā-

maṅgal, who flourished in the 16th century, made mention of passports being used by the merchants, duly signed and sealed by the king.

Bengal was once famous for her efficiency in the art of ship-building, and her commercial activities established for her a high reputation worthy to be remembered. Besides, such foreign works as 'The Mahawanso' of Ceylon wherein mention has been made of stupendous Bengali ships in which Prince Bijay and his companions arrived in Ceylon, in the 6th century B.C., and other works of authority on Bengal's maritime activity similarly furnish authentic accounts on the subject, hitherto neglected by our countrymen. In the Manasāmaṅgal poems and the Chaṇḍikāvyaś we find animated descriptions of the commercial and maritime activities of the Bengali people during the pre-Mahomedan period, although the poets dealing with those subjects belonged to a subsequent age. These accounts refer to a period when Bengal enjoyed political independence and when her merchants crossed the seas on commercial enterprises unfettered by the trammels of the social rules. The ships visited distant countries, such as Ceylon, Guzrāt and Jāvā and the old Bengali literature described incidentally the routes, the islands, etc., passed and their inhabitants, and various other things in connection with their voyages. The description, though otherwise exaggerated due to poetic excesses, is amazingly accurate in respect of the route taken by the vessels. With all these poetic extravagance and absurdities the mention of huge crabs and lobsters in the Madras waters, by the poets, is found to be true even to this day.

The mention of the Portuguese pirate-ships (Armadas) and the once-important ports of Tamluk and Chicacole (Madras Presidency), which we come across so often in the pages of our old literature, is a matter of common knowledge. The Bengali ships are stated as having doubled Cape

Comorin and reached Pātan or Somnāthpātan in Guzrāt. The hugeness of ships and the picturesque shape of the prows representing various animals according to the traditional mode of ship-building (as mentioned in Juktikalpataru) are interesting indeed. The poets seem to have described facts, though not entirely free from poetic flourishes. The rites and beliefs in connection with sea-voyage and sea-going vessels curiously resemble those prevalent in the days of Greek civilization, in Europe.

The crew of a ship consisted of carpenters, pilots and naval forces. There was a day when carpenters filled the places of modern engineers both in the East and the West, when these ships were principally made of wood and plied with the help of sails and oars.

The overseas trade once carried on by the people of Bengal, was really extensive and the merchandise in which they generally dealt consisted mainly of agricultural products which formed the chief resources of the country. Among other items of export, glass deserves special mention.

The fact that Bengal once used to manufacture glass can be substantiated by reference to the pages of the old Bengali literature as also to the statement made in the Periplus.

The grains, earthen and wooden wares, and cloths (specially of very fine textures) were exported in exchange for horses, spices and other articles. Spices were perhaps brought from the East Indies.

Now, so far as costume is concerned, there has not been any considerable change. The dress worn by the people of this country, in ages long gone by, was very much the same as it is in the present day. In spite of this fact it is not very difficult to mark some peculiarities which were current in the Hindu period and were even in existence during a considerable part of the Mahomedan rule. We have it, on

the authority of the *Manasāmaṅgal* by Baṇsīdās, a book written on the 16th century A.D., that people used to wear the cloth almost in the same fashion as their up-country brethren do it now. In the by-gone days of the Hindu rule the warriors perhaps wore armour, indications of which may be found in the *Dharmamaṅgal* poems. No doubt the practice lingered, to some extent, even during the Mahomedan period. Wearing of velvet shoes by the warriors and silver shoes •by the rich as described by the poets of the Dharma songs and the *Manasāmaṅgal* poems deserves our notice. In the days of old Hindu rule the fashion was perhaps to wear *chāddar*, save and except on special occasions. The more general practice of wearing shirts and coats seems to have come into existence with the advent of Mahomedans in this country.

In the *Manasāmaṅgal* poems we find the use of turban (*Pāgrī*) confined only to the well-to-do section of the community.

It is in the costume of the ladies that we mark a more remarkable change. They used *sāḍis* of fine fabric which are now no longer in use. Among these may be mentioned Meghnāl, Meghdumbur, Gaṅgājālī and other *sāḍis*. The ladies wore an underwear resembling the petticoat of the present day and a kind of belt known as the *Nibibandha*.<sup>1</sup> We find the underwear mentioned in the *Gobindalīlāmṛta* of Jadunandan Dās. Sometimes the ladies of aristocratic families wore *Ghāgrā* (gowns), *Oḍnā* (scarfs) and *Kāṇchulī* (corsets) probably after the Mahomedan fashion. But *Kāṇchulī* (corset) had the antiquity of the days of the Vedic culture. Among the toilet requisites *Dhūp* (incense) was invariably used to scent the hair. *Amloki* or *myrobalan* was generally used in place of soap, though the use of the latter

<sup>1</sup> The belt used by men was known as the *Patukā*.



was not wholly unknown as we find in the *Kāmasāstra* of Bātsyayāna the mention of *Phenakā* (a kind of soap). The art of decorating the face with paints was practised with great care. It was known as *Patra-Rachanā* (lit. leaf-painting) and somewhat commonly described as *Alakā* and *Tilakā*.

The *Tilakā* marks had a great utility in indicating the caste, to which a particular man belonged.

Some changes are noticeable in respect of ornaments. Such ornaments as *Keyūr*, *Aṅgada* and *Valaya* of various types have come down to us from a remote past and we find mention of them in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. Many of these ornaments were worn by both the sexes from the forgotten past down to a considerable part of the Mahomedan period. Of the very old ornaments *Sāteśwarī Hār* and *Hirāmaṅgal Kaḍi* (for the ears) attract our attention. *Magarkhāḍu* and *Mallatoḍar* are some of the old items of ornaments. The *mailas* or wrestlers favoured this ornament which they wore on their feet when going out to exhibit the feats of arms. *Khāḍu* and *Tāḍ*, a kind of armlet, once constituted articles of gift for presentation purposes. *Beśar* was another kind of old ornament which used to adorn the nose, and is still worn in some parts of the country.

Some of these ornaments are still favoured by women in the country-side, though the glamour of modern civilization has completely revolutionised the ancient forms and usages in the bigger centres of metropolitan life. Jadunandan Dās, in his Bengali version of *Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāja's* Sanskrit work *Gobindalīlāmṛta*, gives an account of the old ornaments and ladies' costumes, while describing the toilet of *Rādhā*.

Culinary art attained a high degree of perfection at the hands of the Bengali women from time immemorial. Knowledge of the details of cooking was considered essential

for women in general and efficiency in this art was looked upon as an attainment even by ladies of high rank in our society. Our poets often took pride in depicting female characters, possessing, among other fine qualities, a knowledge of this special art. Thus Khullanā, Sana kā and a host of other ladies whom we find to have excelled in this art remind us of the typical Greek community of Homeric days.

The Hindus always refrained from taking meals cooked by strangers in support of which hard and fast rules were framed to suit their own interpretation of *āchāra* or purity.

A newly married wife was required to cook dainties and serve them with her own hands to the kinsmen and relatives, assembled to partake of the nuptial feast.

Great stress was always laid upon the selection of the various items of food from considerations of health, and elaborate rules were framed accordingly.

The very old sayings of Dāk and Khanā show the particular attention paid to the selection of food. Even to-day Bengali almanacs show to what excesses restrictions in matters of food were carried. Although, to a casual observer, these rules may appear absurd and meaningless, they are doubtless based on solid hygienic principle.

More attention was given to the preparations of sweets, vegetables and fish curries than that of meat. Special preparations of sweets, called *Ālfā* and *Indramiṭhā* are now completely forgotten in our country though they are so often spoken of by old Bengali poets. *Sitāmiśrī* and *Olālāṇḍu* also are rarely met with.

Among vegetable dishes *Dugdhakusumbhā* was once very famous. Many of the old varieties of fish and meat curries are still prepared in the country.

It seems that before the advent of the Mahomedans in India the people used to enjoy a free life unfettered by

the trammels of increasingly numerous social and religious institutions. The women took part in physical exercises both indoor and outdoor.<sup>1</sup> This may seem strange now-a-days but nevertheless it was a fact based on literary and historical evidence. Examples of women possessing physical strength as in ancient Sparta, may be seen in old Bengali works such as the Dharmamaṅgal poems. The Amazonian princes Mallikā of our folk-literature is an example on this point. The young always took great interest in physical culture. And demonstration of physical feats were often held and enjoyed by the people very much in the same way as the boxing tournaments were in Western countries.

The wrestling of Prince Lāusen with his wicked adversary shows the modes generally adopted in a contest. In the Mayanāmatī songs, East Bengal ballads and the Manasāmaṅgal poems, we learn that hawking or falconry and pigeon-rearing formed some of the favourite pastimes in the days long gone by. Another game once very popular was the celebrated *geru* play. In a *pada* by Chāṇḍīdās we come across the following : ‘ফুলের গেরুয়া লুফিয়া ধরয়ে সঘনে দেখায় পাশ.’ This *geru* or ball-playing still obtains in some parts of West Bengal. But the more popular among the outdoor games was the aristocratic *Chaugān* corresponding to polo, which was current during the Mahomedan rule. The game was a favourite one with Emperor Ākbar. The word ‘Chaugān’ is Persian, signifying play with a ball and a stick. It was played on horseback (see Encyclo. Britt.) and is known to have originated in Kashmir from which it travelled to different countries including Persia, Tibet, Manipur and Bengal, Bengal being directly indebted to Manipur for its introduction into this country. The

<sup>1</sup> See the Dharmamaṅgal Poems, the Mayanāmatī Songs, and the stories of Puṣpamālā and Mallikā.

description of Chaugān play in Ālāol's Padmāvati is interesting. With the loss of her political freedom, Bengal lost many of her indigenous games, especially the outdoor ones, and the ladies gradually ceased to take any interest in them.

Of the indoor games dice and chess found favour in the days of old as they do now. Even the women joined in these games. In the Mayanāmatī songs we learn of a peculiar game known as *Duāpati* which might be the same as or similar to chess.

The description of warfare, as given by our poets, refers to the Hindu period ; but the accounts were written in the Mahomedan period and as such, could not be altogether free from Mahomedan influences. The twelve sub-lords attending a king followed a time-honoured custom.<sup>1</sup> The description of weapons points to the same conclusion. The *muśals*, *mudgars*, *shels*, *sools*, etc., were as old as the days of the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. An elaborate description of these weapons and their use may be found in the Dhanurveda, Arthaśāstra, Nitiprakāśikā and some other works dealing with the subject.<sup>2</sup> Some of these weapons resemble a boomerang of Australia and a cross-bow of mediaeval Europe. The mention of swords therein leads us to suppose that Bengal might have manufactured the weapon. The chariots, the elephants, the cavalry and the infantry were known as the four arms. There was no caste-distinction among soldiers who were recruited from all sections of the community. Even foreigners were employed, of whom Telugus (the Madrasis) were prominent.

<sup>1</sup> See the Dharmamaṭgal Poems of Rāmchandra Bandyopadhyay.

<sup>2</sup> See Gustav Opperts' 'The Weapons, Army Organisations and Political Maxims of the Ancient Hindus' and Rāmdās Sen's 'Bhārat-Rahasya.'

As for war-music it may be said with certainty that many of the old instruments are still used. Among these the varieties of drums and pipes attract our attention. The horn is no longer to be found although it was extensively used.

After the conquest of Bengal by the Mahomedans, the two communities, *e.g.*, the Hindus and the Muslims lived together on cordial terms and the vexed question of Hindu-Moslem unity did not arise at all. Although the Mahomedan rulers at first grew unpopular with their Hindu subjects because of their foreign origin and iconoclastic activities, the situation changed as soon as their religious zeal abated with the march of time and the rulers began to direct their attention to administrative affairs. Of course ill-will existed in individual cases as it exists everywhere. But it was caused rather by personal jealousies than by any communal dissensions. When an autocrat abuses his powers—be he a Hindu or a Mahomedan—ill-feelings are, as a matter of fact, sure to grow, and this does not require any serious communal difference to aggravate it.

No wonder, therefore, that the two communities sometimes fell out under similar circumstances. Among other works, the East Bengal Ballads and the Manasāmaṅgal poems contain descriptions of racial animosities being provoked by similar causes.

Bengal was not much known in the past to the outside world for the excellence of her architectural work. According to the verdict of Western experts Bengal could not develop her architecture to any great extent on account of certain natural causes, for example, want of stone quarries and general unsuitability of the soil for solid stone-buildings. Among the supporters of this theory Mr. Fergusson's views deserve special mention. Although this theory seems to be to some extent correct, it is nevertheless

open to contention. Our old literature throws a side-light on our past architecture the grandeur of which seems to be a wonder to us. No doubt the poets are apt to exaggerate, but what they said are generally true. In the *Chaṇḍikāvya* of Dwija Kamala Lochan and in many other works we find excellent descriptions of stone-buildings inlaid with gems of various colours.

The peculiarities of temple-construction, with jars fixed above the spires, were indeed remarkable. The extensive use of glass too is worthy of notice. The peculiarities of the building of cities and the construction of fortresses had been mentioned in detail by various poets among whom we may specially mention the poet Bhāratchandra, the great contemporary and court-poet of Rāja Kṛṣṇachandra, who flourished in the first half of the 18th century. The Mahomedan architecture developed in no small degree in Bengal—which belonged to the Gaudīān type. Distinct traces of this type of architecture in the works of Bhāratchandra and many others bearing Mahomedan stamp, are noticeable. The architectural ruins of Gauḍ, once the capital of the Mahomedans, draw the admiration of the world and Fergusson had incidentally to admit the abundance of stone-buildings in this province.

But the greatest credit of Bengal lies, according to this authority, in the introduction of curvilinear roofing in her buildings. Bengal is said to have taught the world the method of building this kind of roofs. With bamboo and thatch the Bengalees used to build curvilinear roofs in the past though these are now growing gradually scarce.

Even in stone- and brick-built houses, these roofings were used. In old Gauḍ, ruins of such houses may still be seen. Another peculiarity in the building of houses was quite unique. It was the use of twelve doors in a room, known as *Bāraduāri Ghar*. In Gauḍ there

still exist the ruins of a room with twelve doors. In the recently discovered East Bengal ballads, *Bāraduāri Ghar* has been mentioned in more than one place. Among other peculiar constructions the steel-house for Lakṣmīndra in the *Manasāmaṅgal* poems, the *Taṅgiḡhar* rooms built in a lake as is found in the *Chañḍikāvya* and *Gorakṣavijay* and the underground prison-houses deserve special mention. The peculiar ditches or moats surrounding a fortified castle, the concentric circles of wards around a city, the Chowkbazar, and the Kotowali (the police station) were perhaps partly Mahomedan in origin. But the system of allotting different parts of a city to different castes and professions perhaps mainly originated with the Hindus and we read about them in old Sanskrit literature on architecture and town-planning.

So far as religion is concerned, the country showed a marked tendency, especially during the Mahomedan rule towards transition from Buddhism to the present-day Hinduism. If we trace the course of religion from the 10th down to the 11th century we see the Mahayāna form of Buddhism holding the people in its sway. Although various other cults,—the Dharma cult, for example, counted many adherents simultaneously, still it must be admitted that most of them had an element of Buddhism in them. Such was really the influence of Buddhism in those days, that the Dharma cult which possessed an extensive literature of its own comprising, among others, the *Śūnya Purāṇ*, the *Dharma-maṅgal* poems and the *Mayanāmatī* songs, is supposed by many as being an offshoot of Buddhism. The quarrels between the rival cults, *e.g.*, between the *Sun* and the Dharma cults, fill up some forgotten pages of our history. The Sun-cult is still traceable in the tenets of *Grahāchāryyas* and the *Bratakathās* (*viz.*, of Iturāl). Although some zealous Hindu Rājās

of the Sen dynasty did much to revive Pauranik Hinduism as it exists to-day, Buddhism was still there in some form or other among the masses. In spite of the degeneration of its old ideals, the legacy of moral sentiment of Buddhism was not altogether lost to the masses. The *Bratakathās* and the *Rupakathā* of Mālañchamālā bear evidence of this fact. With the advent of the Mahomedans, Buddhism finally lost its lingering hold upon the people, and out of its ruins grew up the present form of Hinduism, revived and remodelled by the zealous Brāhmaṇ reformers who particularly emphasised the observance of purity in social practices, or *āchāra*, as it was called, evidently with a view to counteracting the evils arising out of contact with alien people, people professing a different religion. Perhaps it was Vaiṣṇavism that sounded the death-knell of Buddhism in this country having assimilated some of its best features.

Though Buddhism gradually declined in this country we cannot forget its great merits. The theory of cosmogony, it is to be observed, as expounded in the *Sūnya Purāṇ* of the Dharma cult, bore resemblance to the idea of creation propounded in the *Rigveda*.

The idea of action<sup>1</sup> once again exercised a more powerful influence over the minds of the people than that of complete surrender in everything to gods, fostered by the prevailing cult of devotion which became subsequently the guiding factor in the life of the people of this country.

In the *Mayanāmatī* songs we find the son putting his own mother into boiling oil. This is evidently an un-Hindu

<sup>1</sup> For example, we may mention the characters of Lāusen, Kāluḍom, Lakhā, Rañjāvatī, *Mayanāmatī* and a host of others to be found in the Buddhist literature, such as the *Dharmamaṅgal* poems and the *Mayanāmatī* songs.



action and every Hindu will fill abhorrence at such an instance of monstrously unfilial conduct. This we trace to the degenerate Mahāyān form of Buddhism when the theory of action exercised its sway over the minds of the people. The belief that mystic rites and mantras could work wonders may be traced not only in almost every page of the literature of the Dharma-cult but also in the literature of the Hindu religion, as illustrated by the legends of the sages, *e.g.*, Durbāsā, Biśwāmitra and Bhṛgu. Throwing one into boiling oil had also its parallel in the story of Sudhanvā of the Mahābhārata. Karna's sacrifice of his son Br̥śaketu to satisfy a Brāhmaṇ guest in the familiar story of the Mahābhārata has its parallel in the Buddhistic story of Luichandra.

All these tend to show that perhaps the form of Hinduism, then prevalent, was considerably influenced by the Buddhistic ideas and beliefs as a result of which the Bengali recensions of the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa are specially intermingled with such grotesque narratives. The *Agni Parīkṣā* (or fire-ordeal) of Sītā has its parallel in the stories of Behulā and Khullanā of the Manasāmaṅgal poems, and the Chaṇḍikāvya which are apparently imbued with the Buddhistic ideas. The *Tapasyā* or self-mortification of Rāvaṇa of the Rāmāyaṇa story corresponds to the self-mortification of Lāusen and Rañjāvati of the Dharma songs.

As regards education it may be said that it was never neglected in the pre-Mahomedan days. There were regular schools for imparting education in the primary, secondary and the higher or collegiate stages. Centres of higher education are still well-known as *Tols*. It is most peculiar that caste was no bar to education. In the old Chaṇḍikāvya story Śrīmanta, though a *Bāniā* by caste, received the same kind of education with the Brāhmaṇ boys. The Sārādāmaṅgal by Dayārām and the East Bengal

ballads describe vividly the system of education obtaining in old days.

What strikes us most is the attention given to female education. Girls were equally educated with the boys, sometimes reading in the same school under the same *guru*. The story of Vidyā-Sundar in which Princess Vidyā challenged all the princes of the world for a literary contest with her, was not altogether a myth. Literacy prevailed among the lowest as well as the highest classes. Thus we find Phullarā, the fowler-woman, quoting the Śāstras, Khullanā, the *Bānīā* lady, recognising her husband's handwriting, a Brāhmaṇ woman in her connection forging the letter, and a minister's daughter romantically changing a letter in a manner which helped to bring about her union in marriage with a young man for whom she conceived a liking. Even high-class public women were also credited with the capacity for transacting documentary business as we learn from the Mayanāmatī songs. Another public woman of the Dharmamaṅgal poems put knotty questions, shewing great erudition, to a prince, for solution. Besides having literary education, the women of older days were expert in the fine arts. The decorative excellence of Surikṣā in the Dharmamaṅgal poems and of many other women in embroidery and other works astound us in no small degree. There are also numerous examples of excellent *Ālipanā* drawings in the East Bengal Ballads and other works. Dancing was so much cultivated in the pre-Islamic days that Behulā of the Manasāmaṅgal poems earned the epithet of "Dancing Behulā," and the story says that this qualification of Behulā was instrumental even in restoring her dead husband to life. The stories of Mallikā, Kaliṅgā, Lakhā and a host of others show conclusively to what extent the women of our land gave attention to physical culture, like the Spartan women of ancient Greece. These stories prove

the spirit of the times and the pictures were, perhaps, drawn from the exact state of society in a particular period of her life.

About the various castes it cannot be denied that there was much peculiarity in the by-gone days due probably to the prevalence of Buddhism in the land. In the *Sūnya Purāṇ* and the *Dharmamaṅgal* poems, we find such low castes as the *Hādis* and the *Doms* receiving even the laudatory homage of the staunchest Brāhmaṇs and occupying the foremost position in society. The sun-worshiping *Grahā-chāryyas* and also the *Bāniās* once occupied a better status than they hold now. How these castes came to lose their position and the Kaṇouji Brāhmaṇs came to occupy the forefront in the Hindu society is, in spite of meagre data, an interesting study. Different parts of a city were allotted to different castes. Besides, we see from the times of Raghunandan the stereotyped form of the present-day Hindu society with the Brāhmaṇs as its undisputed head, has held its ground. But previously, Buddhism, Nāthism and some other cults, and in later days, Vaiṣṇavism,—strove to oppose it with all their strength. If we read the Buddhistic Jātak stories and some other works it seems to us that the reason for the superior position of some inferior castes of the present day was that, caste was in the making at the life-time of Buddha, as Prof. Rhys Davids would say. The present form dates with Raghunandan (15th century) but the attempt for stereotyped caste-system and Brahmanic supremacy may be traced even from the days of the Mahābhārata when the Kṣatriyas disputed the position of the Brāhmaṇs with great force. In Bengal it was the Sen Rājās who became the staunch upholders of Brahmanic supremacy and established gradations in society from the standpoint of merit alone which latterly turned to be the

hereditary privilege of the descendants of the original holders of those special recognition. The system has since been known as *kulinism*, and perhaps has wrought more mischief than benefit to society, since its first inception.

In respect of Agriculture, the Bengali peasants attained a high degree of perfection at a very remote period of our history (9th-10th century). The sayings of Dāk and Khanā,—especially the latter, furnish a store-house of agriculture wisdom—the heritage of the Bengal peasantry. There is no doubt that the cultivators committed to memory most of these aphorisms and followed the principles contained in them in their agricultural operations with the utmost precision. It is a peculiar feature that astrology formed an important element in these aphorisms and the technicalities employed in them must have been highly useful to the peasant-folk from the practical point of view. It may safely be said that the cultivators could appreciate essential principles of the science of astrology, disseminated amongst the masses, by means of couplets which could be easily understood. The weather forecast in the aphorisms of Khanā is so definite that the cultivators followed it with great advantage. Specially interesting are the agricultural superstitions (in respect of sowing seeds and plucking fruits) by which our illiterate peasants were guided. In spite of much that can be said against superstitions in general, we must admit that some of them were really beneficial to agriculture as they are evidently the outcome of agricultural wisdom, based on the practical experience of our race in the matter, from an early age.

As regards the economic condition of the people, it may be said without any hesitation that during the pre-Mahomedan period, as also to some extent in the Mahomedan, they enjoyed considerable prosperity though there were occasional reverses, due chiefly to the misrule of individual

despots. The Mayanāmatī songs, among others, seem to confirm this view, though the picture is clearly overdrawn. Although the common people led rather a plain and simple life during Hindu rule, to the rich, naturally enough, articles of luxury were not altogether unknown. Thus various arts and industries—such as those of weaving, embroidery, painting and others—flourished in the country. *Cowries* were then the prevailing medium of exchange though barter was frequently resorted to, as we read in the old Bengali literature.

# Aspects of Bengali Society

from

Old Bengali Literature

## CHAPTER I

### MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

*Ordeals.*—Before we dwell upon the social customs prevalent in Bengal in the Hindu and the early Mahomedan periods, it would be well to begin with a description of the tests applied in the early days of the history of Bengal for ascertaining the character of criminals and suspected persons. It is needless for us to attempt at tracing the origin of these tests or ordeals. Some of these were extremely crude and might have come down from a remote pre-historic period, others no doubt bear traces of a Tibeto-Burman origin and the rest might have their origin in the degenerate forms of Tāntric Buddhism. In the Maynāmatī songs we find a description of Rājā Govindaachandra testing the integrity of his own mother by throwing her into a vat containing boiling oil which is evidently a monstrous exaggeration. In spite, however, of all the hyperbolic display of poetic fiction, the poets of Manasāmaṅgal and Chaṇḍīkāvyā distinctly indicate some of the tests which were applied for ascertaining the guilt of suspects in the Hindu period. We find numerous forms of these tests suggested as alternative ordeals for Behulā and Khullanā. The Aṣṭaparīkṣā or the eight ordeals so often described by our poets consisted of piety, fire,

water, seat, ring, serpent, iron and balance ordeals.<sup>1</sup> There were three more, namely, the hot iron, wax-house and iron ordeals. These ordeals have something in common with those prevalent in Europe in the contemporary period. Trial with hot iron was often resorted to in England in the pre-Norman period and walking blindfold over red-hot plough-shares, plunging one's arms into the boiling water and grasping red-hot iron, etc., were also some of the English ordeals<sup>2</sup> corresponding to Bengali ones.<sup>3</sup> The ordeals which were intended for invoking divine help rather than appealing to human agency are still resorted to in this country and are now known as 'Jalpadā'—a kind of water

<sup>1</sup> The following forms of ordeal were known as the *Aṣṭaparikṣā* :—

(a) *Dharmādharma Parikṣā* or piety ordeal. Here a person had to thrust his hand into a big jar and pick out a ring from it at once without knowing where it lay.

(b) *Agni Parikṣā* or fire ordeal. Here one was to walk seven times over a furnace covering oneself with cotton.

(c) *Jala Parikṣā* or water ordeal. Here one was to be thrown into water bound hand and foot.

(d) *Āsana Parikṣā* or seat ordeal. Here one was to remain suspended in the air without any support.

(e) *Anguri Parikṣā* or ring ordeal. Here one was to pick up a ring from a jar full of boiling ghee.

(f) *Sarpa Parikṣā* or serpent ordeal. It is traditionally believed that some of the most venomous snakes have gems on their hood. The victim was to seize one from the hood of a snake without being stung.

(g) *Lauha Parikṣā* or iron ordeal. One was to handle red-hot iron.

(h) *Tulā Parikṣā* or balance ordeal. Here one weighed in a balance was required to be as light as a particular piece of gold. See Baṇśidās's *Manasāmaṅgal*, p. 651. Two new ordeals are mentioned in the *Chandrikāvya* by Mukundarām (pp. 181-83), viz., hot iron and wax ordeals. In the former case a piece of red-hot iron was to be carried by the victim who was made to walk round a circle seven times with it. In the latter case one used to be shut into a wax-house which afterwards used to be set on fire. The cooking of iron grain till they become soft and edible is mentioned in the *Manasāmaṅgal* poem by Baṇśidās (p. 619). The system of trial by means of ordeals is described by Hiuenthsang who visited India in the 7th century (see V. Smith's *Early History of India*, 342).

<sup>2</sup> See the *Groundwork of British History* by G. F. Warner and Marten.

<sup>3</sup> *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. I. See also the article ভারতের প্রাচীন বিচার-পদ্ধতি by Surendranath Ghosh, *Pravāsi, Śrāvaṇ*, 1330 B.S.

ordeal, 'Chāulpaḍā'—rice ordeal, 'Nalchālā'—reed ordeal, 'Bāṭichālā'—cup ordeal, etc. In Jalpaḍā the culprit is to drink water charmed with Mantras, the effect of which is believed to make him vomit blood. Similarly in Chāulpaḍā the culprit is to chew rice under certain condition which is believed to produce some effect indicative of his guilt. The last two ordeals, the reed and the cup, when charmed, lead the person who touches them, to the culprit or the spot of the perpetration of the guilt.

*Marriage and dowry.*—There was a curious custom of giving away a younger sister of the bride to the bridegroom as a part of the dowry. In Māpikchandrarājār Gān, composed some time between the 11th and the 12th centuries, we find Rājā Govindachandra marrying Adunā, the elder daughter of Rājā Harischandra of Sabhār, and receiving Padunā, his younger daughter as dowry, who, however, for all intents and purposes became his wife.<sup>1</sup> When marrying, the Rājā received a hundred maids, in addition, to look after his household.

Marriages were held as a fitting occasion, by the well-to-do sections of the community such as the Bāṇiās, for the display of wealth and pomp, and these may be found in the

<sup>1</sup> See Māpikchandra Rājār Gān (Vanga Sāhitya Parichaya, by D. C. Sen, Vol. I, pp. 46, 47, 50, 74 and 75) and 'Gopichandrer Gān.' Mr. Nalinikānta Bhaṭṭasāli refers to the practice of giving away the maid attendants of a girl of respectable family as part of the dowry to the bridegroom at the time of marriage as being still prevalent in the district of Jalpaiguri. See p. 9, Bhaṭṭasāli's edition of Maynāmatī songs. Professor Jogeśchandra Rāy says that the practice prevailing in the Rājā's palace in Orissa is to give away the maid attendants of the bride in dowry on the occasion of a marriage, *Prativā, Bhādra*, 1328 B.S. Compare the reference to 'Nityānanda-Vaṇśa-Vistār' (p. 12). But the custom in many cases is to give away sisters as part of a dowry. The similarity in the two names, Adunā and Padunā, and the fact that on Govindachandra's desertion of the palace the other wives of the Rājā went to the harem of Khetu, his foster-brother, Adunā and Padunā remaining true to the ascetic prince, seem to indicate that Padunā who was given away to Govindachandra along with his wife Adunā, was her sister and did not hold an inferior position. See also Bhaṭṭasāli and Datta's ed., *Maynāmatīr Gān*, p. 8.



description of the marriage ceremony of Lakṣmīndra, son of Chānd Sadāgar in the Manasāmaṅgal poems.<sup>1</sup>

The system of receiving dowry ('pan') was also in vogue in the past with this difference that the bride's side, and not the bridegroom's side, as is the case now-a-days, was the recipient. But it still remains the same with the lower classes (*e. g.*, the Māthiāls). The songs of the Sun-god are full of pathos expressing sentiments of a girl whose father having received the 'pan' before an assembly was under the legal and moral obligations to allow her to be taken away by her husband at a tender age when she naturally longed for the society of her parents. The pathetic outbursts of feeling on such occasions give a true and unvarnished picture of a particular aspect of our society.<sup>2</sup>

Owing to the marriage of girls before adolescence, parents had often to deplore untimely widowhood of their daughters—the saddest calamity in the life of married girls. Widow-remarriage was not allowed in the upper classes of the Hindu society. Besides widows were not allowed to participate in social functions such as marriage, as their appearance was considered inauspicious. The lot of these girls became harder when, with the loss of their husbands, they gradually found themselves deprived of almost all the privileges enjoyed by a woman and put as it were under a social

<sup>1</sup> See Manasāmaṅgal poems of Bijay Gupta, Baṅśidā, Kṣetnānanda, etc.

<sup>2</sup> See the songs of the Sun-god :

\*                      \*                      \*

“ভাঙ্গা নাও মাদারের বৈঠা ঢলকে ওঠে পাণী ।  
 ধীরে ধীরে বাওরে মাঝি আমি মায়ের কান্দন শুনি ॥  
 ভাঙ্গা নাও মাদারের বৈঠা ঢলকে ওঠে পাণী ।  
 ধীরে ধীরে বাওরে মাঝি ভাই ভাইয়ের কান্দন শুনি ॥  
 ভাঙ্গা নাও মাদারের বৈঠা ঢলকে ওঠে পাণী ।  
 ধীরে ধীরে বাওরে মাঝি ভাই বুনের কান্দন শুনি ॥”

ban, requiring to pass their lives in austerities, attended with fasting, vigil and numerous other hardships. So, it is not difficult to fathom the feelings of a girl-widow's parents. In their affection the parents of the unfortunate widows would sometimes allow them to use *Fāg* (red powder), gold bracelets and *Pāṭṣāḍi* (a kind of cloth) in substitution for *Sindūr* (vermilion), *Sāñkhā* (shell bracelets) and *Khuān* (cloth) <sup>1</sup> which only the wives with their husbands alive are privileged to wear. The practice of chewing betels by widows as mentioned elsewhere and the practice of using costumes and ornaments by them, as everybody knows, are now denounced in our society.

*Jaypatra*.—There was a time when commerce was in a flourishing condition in Bengal. The merchant community in those days held a position very little different from that of a prince. The merchant princes in those days sailed across the deep in an undaunted spirit and spread the name of Bengal far and wide as they stopped at various ports with ships laden with the products of this land. In course of these voyages years would sometimes elapse before they could re-embark for home. It happened not infrequently that a merchant had to go away when his wife was in an early stage of pregnancy, too early sometimes to be noticed. It was often found from experience that these wives, after the departure of their husbands, were subjected to popular suspicion and scandal. Our folklore is full of descriptions of the miseries of these wives.<sup>2</sup> In the story of *Khullanā*

<sup>1</sup> See *Manasāmaṅgal* by Keṭakādās Kṣemānanda :

“খনি বদলে দিব কাঁচা পাটের শাড়ী !

শঙ্খ বদলে দিব স্বর্ণের চুড়ি ।

সিন্দূর বদলে দিব ফাউগের গুড়ি ॥”

<sup>2</sup> See *Thākurdādār-jhuli* by D. Majumdār.

in *Chandikāvya* we find the merchant Dhanapati leaving for Singhal (Ceylon), under orders of the king, for trade-purposes with ships laden with merchandise. The merchant had to stay away from home for a very long time. Shortly after his departure, his wife Khullanā showed signs of conception and in due time gave birth to a son. Śrīmanta was the name given to this boy, who at an early age was sent to a Pāṭhsālā where his proficiency in all the subjects struck his Guru with astonishment. On one occasion, the Guru dropped a hint regarding his parentage by way of a joke, which the lad deeply took to his heart. Thereupon he left home on board a ship in quest of his father and finally came back with Dhanapati, his father. Instances of this nature are numerous in our folk-literature. The opinion of the society often influenced the minds of the husbands of these hapless wives and they were persecuted even by their husbands. In these circumstances, a clear necessity demanded some sort of remedy with a view to affording protection to these women and safeguarding their fair name, and 'Jaypatra'<sup>1</sup> was the thing which gave them the remedy. This was a letter given to them by their husbands, on the eve of their departure for foreign countries, admitting if their wives were in an advanced state of pregnancy or even if there were any signs of the same. This document, which was to be signed by the husband and sealed in his presence, used to be kept by the wife for production when necessary, and was moreover, recognised by the court.

It is difficult to ascertain when this peculiar custom came to be introduced in Bengal, but that there was once an imperative necessity for such a measure is an unquestionable fact.

<sup>1</sup> See Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām's *Chandikāvya* (Baṅgabāsī ed.), p. 190.

*Charms.*—The use of charms by women to exercise control over their husbands was very popular in the 15th and the 16th centuries in Bengal. It was specially resorted to by women who wanted to make their husbands subservient to their wishes as they were constantly in dread of losing all hold on them and of their co-wives exercising greater control on their husbands. There might have been some justification for this action on the part of the wives who, in many cases, were treated with neglect by their husbands. The drugging and charming perhaps came to our country from Kāmrup, one of the centres of the Tāntric cult. It is said in the countryside, even to-day, that the women of Kāmrup are capable of transforming a man into a lamb, to which unfortunate condition many strangers visiting that place are believed to have been reduced by unscrupulous women in the past. The belief in the theory that drugging or the simple utterance of Mantras can change a human being (like the characters in the stories told in the Arabian Nights) into a lower animal, has been handed down to us from the days of the *Tāntric Mantrāyana Cult of Buddhism* which however has strange similarity with the Tāntric Śākta cult of Eastern India as we still find in the temple of Kāmākhyā (Kāmrup) in the province of Assam. The similarity in the matter of the use of charms and drugs in Bengal with England seems apparent when we read Kavikaṇkaṇ's *Chandikāvya* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, both of whom flourished in the 16th century, giving almost the same list of magic ingredients for the purpose of charming.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Kavikaṇkaṇ's *Chandikāvya*, pp. 136-37 :

“কচ্ছপের নখ আন কুষ্ঠীরের দাঁত ।

কোটরের পঁচা আন গোধিকার আঁত ॥” ইত্যাদি ।

These formulas might have travelled to Europe from India, at a very ancient time, with the Indian Gypsies.

*Freedom of Women.*—Women enjoyed perhaps greater freedom before the Mahomedan invasion. In Maynāmatī songs we find the mother Maynāmatī going to meet her son Rājā Govindachandra when he was transacting business in his court. The dowager queen dressed herself in a white Sāḍī, took a stick (made of hintāl wood) in her hand as she was old and chewed scented betels when proceeding to the court.<sup>1</sup> We also find in the same songs the queens supply the ingredients for what was to serve the purpose of collyrium to paint the eyes with.

Adunā and Padunā went to the house of an ordinary Bāṇiā named Nimāi on some business.<sup>2</sup> In the Dharma-maṅgal songs which breathed Buddhistic sentiments,

(Bring the nails of tortoise, teeth of crocodile, an owl from its hole and the biles of lizard, etc.).

See also Baṅśīdās's Manasāmaṅgal, p. 503 :

“ কাকড়ার বাম পাও উন্দুরের পিত ।

পেচার বাঁও চক্ষের কর কাজল রঞ্জিত ॥” ইত্যাদি

(Bring the left leg of a crab, the biles of a rat and the left eye of an owl to supply the ingredients for what was to serve the purpose of collyrium to paint the eyes with. See the Witches' broth in Macbeth, which contains, among many other things, eye of newt, adder's fork, maw of shark, wool of bat, scale of dragon, gall of goat, lizard's legs, and wings of owlet.

*Cf.* The incantations of women in the Vedic age, who were afraid of their co-wives. R̥gveda, X. 145 and X. 149. See also the Atharvaveda.

<sup>1</sup> See Maynāmatī song :

“ ধবল বস্ত্র নিল ময়না পরিধান করিয়া ।

হিস্তালের লাঠি নিল হস্তে করিয়া ॥

\* \* \* \*

পান খাইতে খাইতে বুড়ি ময়না যাচ্ছে চলিয়া ।

\* \* \* \*

দরবারেতে যাইয়া ময়না রূপস্থিত হৈল ॥”

<sup>2</sup> See Maynāmatī songs.

descriptions are found of women enjoying greater personal liberty in all the spheres of life including even the battle-field where they are found fighting side by side with their comrades of the opposite sex.<sup>1</sup> Examples of free love between men and women are abundant in the Mymensingh Ballads, proving without doubt that women of all grades of the society "commanded then a greater freedom than in the days that followed.

*Garland and Sandal-paste* (Mālā-chandan).—In social gatherings it was the practice to offer garland and sandal-paste to the most respected guest present as a mark of honour. These could only be offered by the host himself and naturally most of the guests present in such a gathering jealously watched the conferring of the honour. Such gatherings often gave rise to bitterness amongst castemen who found it a suitable occasion to decry one another and tried to uphold the prestige of their respective families. In those days political activities were thrown into the background and social matters occupied the fore-front of public attention. A vivid description of Mālā-chandan contest is to be found in Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām's *Chandikāvya*, pp. 175-76.

*Passport*.—This document with the royal seal issued in former days was known as 'Berājpatra.' A kind of passport in the shape of 'Puri' or thread is found mentioned in the life of Mālādhār Basu of Kulingram.<sup>2</sup> In the days of Chaitanyadev, people intending to go to Puri on pilgrimage had to pass through this village. The family of Rāmānanda, to which Mālādhār Basu also belonged, had the right of issuing passports to the pilgrims in the shape of a piece of thread. The pilgrim wore the thread on one of his arms.

<sup>1</sup> See the *Dharmamaṅgal songs*.

<sup>2</sup> See *Chaitanya-Charitāmṛta*, p. 176, and *Baṅgabhāṣā o Sāhitya*, p. 152.

*Penance.*—The penance ‘Sāle-Bhar’<sup>1</sup> (i.e., self-torture by impalement) was prevalent in the pre-Mahomedan days. A devotee practising this penance was inspired with the belief that he would thereby win the choicest favours of the god he worshipped. In the Dharmamaṅgal songs it is mentioned that the queen Rañjāvatī got a son (the famous Lāusen) by practising this penance.

*Fondness for the dog.*—This animal which is now regarded as untouchable by the orthodox Hindus and Mahomedans was a pet at least in the twelfth century. In Maṇikachandra Rājār Gān it has been described that when Rājā Govindachandra left his palace with ascetic’s vow, his birds, cows, elephants and dogs were so much moved that they set up wailing for him. His favourite dogs which were no less than a hundred and eighty in number<sup>2</sup> threw themselves at his feet as if much moved over his imminent departure. Again in the same place we find that these one hundred and eighty dogs were not only favoured in our homes, but received regular training if they happened to belong to rich masters.<sup>3</sup> Dogs in those days served also the purpose of keeping watch over a house. Hāḍi Siddhā, the Guru of Govindachandra, made arrangements for the maintenance of a pair of formidable dogs to prevent the Rājā

1 See Dharmarājer-gīt by Narasiṅha Basu :

“ চাপায়ে যখন আমি শালে দিলাম ভর ।

সামুল্যার উপদেশ ধর্ম দিলা বর ॥ ”

(When I, Rañjāvatī, got myself impaled at Chāpāi to get a son by the advice of the priestess Sāmulyā, the god Dharma granted me the desired boon.)

2 “ নও বুড়ি কুস্তা কান্দে চরণত পড়িয়া । ”

Maṇikachandra Rājār Gān.

3 “ শিকারী খেলাইতে কান্দে নও বুড়ি কুকুর । ”

*Ibid.*

from entering the houses of his subjects for alms, by way of testing the strength of asceticism of that monarch. These dogs were named 'Hāpān and Jhāpān.'<sup>1</sup> The naming of dogs was another peculiarity of those days. They often indicated the nature of the animal, for instance, Hāpān signifies quick-breathing and Jhāpān, jumping.

All these prove the popularity of dogs in ancient Bengal suggesting a coincidence with the place of the animal in the present European society.

*Likeness for luxuriant hair.*—In the Mahomedan period the Hindus used to keep their hair long, a custom inherited by them from their forefathers.<sup>2</sup> It is, however, interesting to trace the change of national taste in this direction from time immemorial to the present day. With the arrival of the Mahomedans in this country, the taste changed and our people began to imitate the ruling race. They began to cut the hair to a shorter length allowing it just to touch their shoulders and this fashion came to be known as 'Bābri.' Thus the art of hair-dressing, specially plaiting, received a partial check so far as it concerned men, the fair sex keeping

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“ হাপান ঝাপান হিলাল কুকুর। ”

*Ibid.*

The various orders of ascetics of ancient Bengal used to carry sticks or staffs with them for fear of dogs kept by the villagers—See Jaina *Āyāraṃga Sutta*.

*Cf.* The story of the Mahābhārata which tells us that the Pāṇḍavas were preceded by a dog (or the god Dharma in disguise) during their final journey to Heaven.

<sup>2</sup> See *Manasāmaṅgal* by Bijay Gupta (P. S. Gupta's ed.), p. 196.

“ দীর্ঘভুজ লক্ষ্মীন্দর দীর্ঘ মাথার চুল। ”

(Lakṣmīndara possessing large arms had also long hair.)

See also *Rāmāyaṇa* by Kṛttivās (Laṅkākāṇḍa),

“ পলায় রামের সৈন্য নাহি বাঁধে চুল। ”

(The soldiers of Rāma fled so hastily that they could not find time to tie up their hair.)



up the old practice down to the present day. The Bābri also came into disfavour some time after the advent of the Europeans in this land. The Europeans themselves were fond of keeping long plaited hair and using wigs up to the 18th century. But it is not within our scope to trace how and when this fashion changed in England giving place to the practice now prevailing, bringing about, as it did, a corresponding change amongst Europeans in India. We may, with some degree of accuracy, assume that it was the Civil War of 1648 which was responsible for this change. At that time the Puritan anti-Royalists cropped their hair short (to demonstrate their hatred against the Cavaliers who used to keep long hair), a practice which won for them the special epithet of Roundheads, a term by which they latterly came to be known. The English and other European nations imitated the new fashion discarding the old practice. The Bengalis gradually grew accustomed to the fashion introduced by the ruling race. Therefore quite contrary to their tradition, the young generation of Bengal keep longer hair in front of their heads and in many cases the hair at the back is actually cut off exposing the skin in imitation of the European fashion.



# CHAPTER II

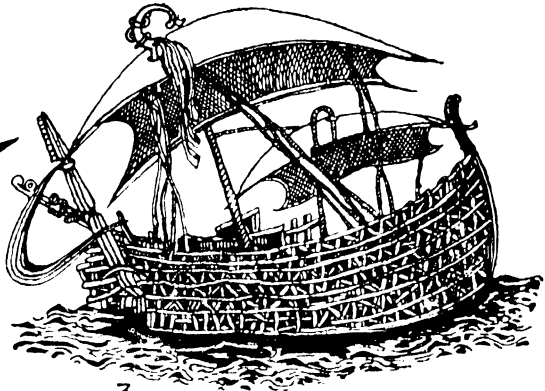
## SHIP-BUILDING AND COMMERCE



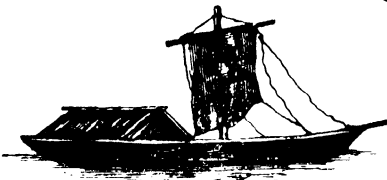
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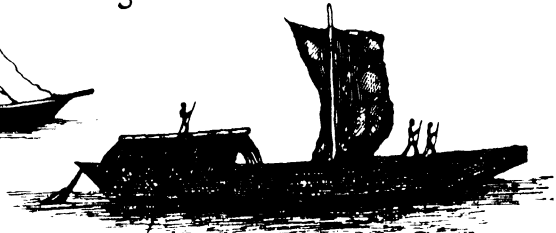
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|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Mayūra Pankhi            | 2. Śuka Pankhi |
| 3. Ancient Sea-going Vessel | 4. Bālām Boat  |
| 5. Bālām Boat               | 6. Godhu Dingā |

## CHAPTER II

### SHIP-BUILDING AND COMMERCE

In ancient Bengal ship-building reached a high degree of perfection and the sea-going vessels used to be actively engaged in promoting the prosperity of the country by conducting commercial intercourse with various places both within and outside India.

The wood required for the construction of ships was teak, gāmbhāri, tamāl, piāl, kāṭhāl, etc. But it seems that the wood of the fabled tree Manapaban was best for the purpose. In the earliest times, the word Manapaban implied the extreme speed of a vessel, compared with the flight of the mind and the wind, and we have a text in the Mahābhārata, ‘মনোমারুতগামিনীম্,’<sup>1</sup> to shew this. But latterly it seems that a certain species of wood was identified with Manapaban, the exact nature of which is not known.

In building a vessel the first work to be done was a ceremony known as ‘Dārābindhā’ or the thrusting of a gold nail (Sonārjal) to the keel (Dārā) with the help of a silver hammer (Hātur). It was done by the owner himself. After this ceremony, the actual work of construction was to begin. First a measurement of the

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ততঃ প্রবাসিতো বিদ্বান্ বিহরেণ নরসুদা ।

পার্থানাং দর্শয়ামাস মনোমারুতগামিনীম্ ॥

সর্ব্ববাসহাং নাবং যন্তযুক্তাং পতাকিনীম্ ।

শিবে ভাগীরথীতীরে নরৈর্বিপ্রংসিভিঃ কৃতাম্ ॥

—মহাভারত, আদিপর্ব্ব ।

vessel was taken. Then the keel was to be carefully constructed with which strong pieces of timber were joined with the help of iron nails. Next the 'Galui' (prow) was to be built. This finished construction of the hold of a vessel. The deck, the Pāṭāṇ (pieces of timber joined to the keel) and the shed were also made. After these, the construction of helm and rudders, and decoration-work made the building of a ship complete.<sup>1</sup> It may be noted that the prow took the appearance of a peacock or a Śuka bird or some other fancy shape specified in the works on art and the ships were accordingly known as 'Mayurpañkhi,' 'Śukapañkhi,' etc. Mention of seven types of prows representing the shapes of a lion, a buffalo, a serpent, an elephant, a tiger and a bird is found in old Sanskrit works on ship-building, such as Juktikalpataru by King Bhoja.<sup>2</sup>

A vivid description of the construction of a vessel is found in the Manasāmaṅgal by Baṅgśīdās (D. Chakravartī's ed., p. 286). An idea of this is given below :--

The lord of Champaka (the merchant Chāṇḍ) constructed some vessels for which he himself performed the ceremony of gold-nailing (Sonār-jal or Jalai). The length of the vessel was fixed at a thousand yards (more than half a mile, evidently an exaggeration). From the keel

<sup>1</sup> For the construction of vessels see also Chāṇḍīdās's Śrīkṛṣṇa Kīrtan (p. 140) published by the Vaṅgīya Sahitya Paṇiṣad.

<sup>2</sup> See also Viśvakoṣ, Vol. X, p. 461. In ancient Europe also the prows of the vessels represented various models. See the figure of the old Attic ship in the Dipylon Vase (British Museum) and Roman galleys in Trajan's column Rostrata. See the pictorial representation of the landing of Vijaya in Ceylon in Ajantā cave paintings. (See R. K. Mukherjee's A History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity, p. 44.) See also the sculptures from the Sanchi Stupas (R. K. Mukherjee's above work, pp. 33-34). The Chinese Junk (Commercial Museum, Philadelphia) as told by Marco Polo (Periplus of the Erythræan Sea, 247, published by Longmans, Green and Co.) may also be mentioned in this connection.

to the central deck the height was six cubits and a half (thirteen Tāl) which was designed to stabilize the equilibrium of a ship. The bamboo-poles required to set a ship in motion where the water was shallow were also measured with thread. More serious work, however, commenced with the construction of the hold of the ship. The wood ordinarily chosen for the purpose was known as 'Manapaban,' noted for imparting the swiftness of the wind or of a wish to the ship. Strong pieces of this timber were joined together with the help of iron nails. In this way the construction of the hold was completed. When it was finished the metallic sheets (piṭh-pāt) were fitted and the mat doors (jhāp) fixed up. Then 'Māthākāṣṭha,' or 'Galui' (prow) was made, decorated with flowers of gold and silver. The principal cabin was built, after the deck, composed of wooden planks, had been fitted up (Pātātan). This chief cabin (Rāighar) was beautifully decorated with rows of artificial flower-garlands. On the vessel the mast (Mālum wood) was duly fitted. The helm (Pātwāl) and its auxiliary piece of timber (Jhokābari) were not forgotten. When these had been finished, a nicely ornamented shed was built on the ship. It had rows of Chāmar (chowrie) and festoons of various types which made the vessel look pretty. Finally the eyes of the figure on the prow of the ship were made with jewels resembling the moon. This completed the building of the ship.

A similar description of ships as found in Kavikaṇkaṇ's *Chandīkāvyā*, pp. 221, 222 (Baṅgabāsī edition), is given below :—

“Seven 'ḍiṅgās' or vessels were built by Biśwakarmā and his son Dārubrahmā with the assistance of Hanumān. The mighty hero Hanumān began to saw the wood of



4. Raṇabhīmā (the Terrible in war).
5. Mahākāyā (the Titanic).<sup>1</sup>
6. Sarbadharā (the All-Container).
7. Nāṭaśālā (the Amusement Hall).<sup>2</sup>

The following were the principal parts of a vessel :—

1. Dāṛa (helm) or pātṛwāl.<sup>3</sup>
2. Mālunkāṣṭha (the mast).
3. Talā (hold).
4. Māthākāṣṭha (prow).

প্রথমে করিল সজ্জ,  
দীর্ঘে ডিঙ্গা শত গজ,  
আড়ে গড়ে বিংশতি প্রমাণ ।  
মকর আকার মাথা,  
গজদন্তের বাতা,  
মাণিকে করিল চক্ষুদান ॥  
গড়ে ডিঙ্গা মধুকর,  
মধ্যে তার রইঘর,  
পাশে গুড়া বসিতে কাণ্ডার ।  
ছসারি বসিতে পাইট,  
উপরে মালুম কাঠ,  
পিছে গড়ে মাণিক ভাণ্ডার ॥  
গড়ে ডিঙ্গা সিংহমুখী,  
নাম যার গুয়ারেখী,  
আর ডিঙ্গা গড়ে রণজয়া ।  
অতি অপরূপ সীমা,  
গড়ে ডিঙ্গা রণভীমা,  
গড়িল পঞ্চম মহাকায়া ॥  
গড়ে ডিঙ্গা সর্ষধরা,  
হীরাযুখী চন্দ্রকরা,  
আর ডিঙ্গা নামে নাটশালা । ইত্যাদি ।  
—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য ।

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the famous ship 'Titanic' of the White Star Line Company.

<sup>1</sup> Inspite of exaggerated descriptions of our poets, these vessels containing amusement hall, as in 'Nāṭṣālā' and containing everything as in the 'All-container' of the list of Kavikaṅkaṇ as also Ajaysēlpāt and Pakṣirāj of the list of Vijay Gupta mentioned later on, may be compared with the present-day ships of the other civilised countries of the world.

<sup>3</sup> Dāra in the present dialect of the countryside means an oar, but in our older works it has often times the meaning given above.



5. Chhaighar (shed).
6. Pāṭātan (deck).
7. Daṇḍakerwāl (oar).
8. Baṇśakerwāl or Dhvaji (Bamboo-pole).
9. Fās (chord).
10. Naṅgar (anchor).
11. Pāl (sail).
12. Dārā (keel).

These names are still used to convey the meanings they did in ancient Bengal. It would be interesting for the purpose of comparative study to find out if some of these technical names were analogous to those used in other parts of India in the literature of ship-building.

In the description given above, we find elaborate details of the different parts of a ship built in those days. Exaggerated descriptions are, however, apparent in the writings of Bijay Gupta and some of the poets of the latter-day Manasā cult, when ship-building as an art was practically abandoned in Bengal. But though there is much of legends in the stories, the old traditions were not altogether lost sight of. Ships of considerable tonnage for commercial purposes were surely still being constructed.<sup>1</sup> The descriptions of voyages often go to show that ships of very large size used to be constructed in Bengal even if sufficient allowances are made for poetic imagination.<sup>2</sup> In Bijay

<sup>1</sup> See Kavikañkaṇ, p. 220. (If 100 carpenters worked for a whole year, only one vessel could be constructed.) Also see Baṇśidās, p. 285. (1,600 carpenters cut the branches of the Manpaban tree and piled them up in rows.) See also p. 282. (By the command of the king the Chief Engineer Giribar and the Admiral Gopāl started with 1,600 carpenters.)

<sup>2</sup> See Turnour's Mahawanso. In this book we come across the following : " Prince Bijay and his followers were sent away by King Siṅhabāhu of Bengal (on board a ship) which was so large as to accommodate full seven hundred passengers." According to this work the ship in which Bijay's Pandyan bride was brought over to Ceylon was of a very large size, having the capacity to accommodate 18 Officers

Gupta's *Manasāmaṅgal* (Pearisaṅkar Gupta's ed.) we find the following :

“First was launched the *Madhukara*. On board this ship, the millionaire *Chānd* took his quarters. It was followed by the ship ‘*Biju-siju*.’ This was so big that it broke the crooked projections of the banks on either side levelling them as she moved on. Then followed the ‘*Guā-rekhi*.’ She was so high that the City of *Laṅkā* situated at a long distance, was visible from its deck. After her came ‘*Bhārār-Pāṭuā*.’ Dancers were on board this ship. She was followed by *Śaṅkhachūd* (the shell-crowned). Her sides seemed to touch two opposite banks of big rivers and her bottom the ground under water. Next started ‘*Ajayselpāt*’ (the invincible steel-bottomed). There was an arrangement for a big fair in this ship. Then came up the ‘*Udaytārā*’ (the morning-star). Her length was so extraordinarily large that when half the portion was exposed to rain the other half enjoyed sunshine. Then sailed the ‘*Tiāṭhuṭi*’ (or the parrot-beaked). She was filled with merchandise, such as jute and coarse blankets, etc. Then followed the ‘*Dhabal*’ (or the white). She moved slowly and often stopped on account of her great bulk. After every stoppage she was to be set in motion by sacrificing a hundred goats. Then sailed the ‘*Kedār*’ ( the great god *Śiva*). Before reaching the shore the ship had to be worshipped with incense and ‘*Pañchapradip*’ as is done in a temple when performing the

of State, 75 menial servants and a number of slaves besides the princess herself and seven hundred other virgins who accompanied her. (See *Rādhākumud Mukherjee's A History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity*, pp. 157-162; also pp. 163-164.) See also ‘*Bāṅgālīr Bal*’ by *Rajendralal Acharyya*, p. 22, and the copper-plate grants found in East Bengal for Bengali docks and harbours of ancient times. See for the above ‘*The Indian Antiquary*,’ Vol. XX, pp. 44-45. (3 copper-plate grants from East Bangal, by *F. E. Pargiter*.) See ‘*Bāṅgālīr Bal*,’ p. 39, and *J.R.A.S.*, 1895, p. 525.

evening service.<sup>1</sup> Then came the 'Pakṣīrāj' (the Prince of Birds). Many fruit trees of considerably large size were there for the use of the people on board the ship. Then was launched the 'Bhīmākṣa' (the fierce-eyed). This vessel carried fourteen lakhs of conch-shells. This was followed by the vessel 'Ankhatāli' (the treasure of shells). Her principal parts were made of sandal wood. Behind her sailed the vessel 'Ājlā-kājlā.' She used to devour a hundred goats at every turn of the river (meaning that its size was so big that at every turn its motion had to be ensured by sacrificing a hundred goats). Thus one after another the ships proceeded to the Gaṅgāsāgar.''<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The popular notion of the old Bengalis about the ships being endowed with life bears a striking similarity to the notion of the people of ancient Europe. We learn in Grote's *History of Greece* (London, John Murray, 2nd ed., Vol. I, p. 214) the following :—"Argus, the son of Phryscus, directed by the promptings of Athenē, built the ship inserting in the prow a piece of timber, from the celebrated oak of Dodona, which was endowed with the faculty of speech." See also Apollon. Rhod., 525, IV, 580. Apollodor, I, 9, 16. Cf. the death of Iphigynia, daughter of Agamemnon in Homer's *Iliad*.

প্রথমে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা নামে মধুকর ।  
 যেই নায়ে চলিল লক্ষের সদাগর ॥  
 তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা নামে বিজুসিঙ্জ ।  
 গঙ্গার দুইকূল ভাঙ্গিয়া বৈকা করে উজ্জ ।  
 তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা নামে গুয়ারেখী ।  
 যার উপরে চড়িয়া রাবণের লঙ্কা দেখি ॥  
 তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা ভাড়ারপাটুয়া ।  
 যেই নায় উঠাইয়া লইল তামিলের নাটুয়া ॥  
 তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা নামে শঙ্খচূড় ।  
 সমুদ্রের দুইকূল ভাঙ্গে পাতালে ঠেকে মুড় ॥

The following descriptions found in the *Manasāmaṅgal* by Bañśīdās (D. Chakravarti's ed.), p. 288, may also be noted :—

“The first vessel which Chānd launched on water was Madhukara. Its deck was filled with earth, so that it took the appearance of land on which a small town with markets was set up. The foredeck was reserved for worship. A tank of fresh water was there with aquatic plants on its surface to keep it cool and with fish of various descriptions. A vegetable and a flower-garden completed the outfit of this wonderful ship.” The merchant Chānd ascertained the cost of this ship to be fourteen lakhs of ‘tankās’ as may be gathered from what he had said to his treasurer Govinda. He furthermore said that the merchandise on board this ship was worth the same amount.<sup>1</sup>

তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা অজয়শেলপাট ।

যাহার উপরে মিলিয়াছে শ্রীফলার হাট ॥

তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা নামে উদয়তারা ।

অনেক নায় ঝড়বৃষ্টি অনেক নায় খরা ॥

তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা নামে টিয়ারুঁটী ।

যেই নায় ভরে সাধু পাট আর ভুটি ॥

—বিজয় গুপ্তের মনসামঙ্গল ।

মাটি ভরাভরি সব করিল স্ফসার ।

হাটঘাট বসাইল সহর বাজার ॥

\* \* \*

চান্দ বলে শুন ভাই গোবিন্দভাগুরী ।

চৌদ লক্ষ টাকা যে নায়ের মূল্য করি ॥

আর চৌদলক্ষের বেসাতি লহ নাও ।

নৌকা লয়্যা ভাগী সাজি স্থানে স্থানে যাও ॥

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল, পৃঃ ২৮৮ ।



Another description from the *Chaṇḍikāvya* by Kavikaṇkan Mukundarām, p. 191, is given below :—

“First was recovered from water the ship Madhukara. Its drawing-room was made of pure gold. Then came the turn of Durgābar. It was full of Gābars or sailors. Then came to sight the ship ‘Guārekhī.’ Her mast (Mālumwood) might be seen from a distance of six miles. Another ship which rose up was Śaṅkhachūḍa. Her breadth was eighty yards. Another ship named Chandrapāl was now recovered from the depth of water. When sailing, her sides touched both the banks of the river. The seventh and the last vessel was Chhotimati which carried rice.”<sup>1</sup>

নবমে সাগরফেনা                      যে নায়ে কলিঙ্গসেনা .

তার শেষে মিলে উদয়গিরি ।

একাদশে লক্ষীপাশা                      যে নায়ে সুমাইর বাসা

নিত্য যাতে পূজে হরগৌরী ॥

উদয়তারা দ্বাদশে                      গঙ্গাপ্রসাদ তার শেষে

চতুর্দশে মিলে মধুকর ।

পঞ্চপাত্র সঙ্গে করি                      বসিয়াছে অধিকারী

যে নায়ে আপনি চন্দ্রধর ॥

চৌদ্দ ডিঙ্গা বাইয়া যায়                      পাইক সবে সাইর গায়

তোল পাড় গোঞ্জরী সাগর ।

ডিঙ্গা সব চলে ঝাটে                      ছুইকুলে প্রজার ঠাটে

দ্বিজ বংশী মনসা-কিঙ্করে ॥

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল, পৃ: ৩১৯ ।

<sup>1</sup>

প্রথমে তুলিল ডিঙ্গা নামে মধুকর ।

সুবর্ণেতে বান্ধা যার বৈঠকির ঘর ॥

তবে ডিঙ্গা তুলিলেন নামে হুর্গাবর ।

আখণ্ড চাপিয়া তাতে বসিল গাবর ॥

তবে ডিঙ্গাখান তোলে নামে গুয়ারেখী ।

হুই প্রহরের পথে যার মালুমকাঠ দেখি ॥

In the midst of the evidently exaggerated descriptions of the poets about big vessels we sometimes come across accounts of smaller crafts in our old literature. We find in *Baṁśidās* (p. 320), for example, the following:—"The admiral Gopāl who sailed first had with him forty-two small boats (*Hāt-nāo*). The mode of construction of the river-boats and that of sea-going ships are now precisely the same as we read about them in our old literature and the nomenclature adopted in the past was on the whole the same as we use it now. It seems that the sea-going ships and the river-crafts were built on the same principle. Even the other day a coasting vessel named the *Āminākhātun* and its sister-vessels of considerable tonnage were built by a merchant of Chittagong with the help of local carpenters and mechanics and the method of building adopted for the purpose appears to be the same as was done in the past. So far as their build and speed are concerned, these ships were perhaps not inferior to those used in England in the days of Nelson. A point of coincidence, *i.e.*, of keeping a flagship in the mercantile marine as we find in the navy of the civilised world to-day, is indeed curious. The number of ships, *i.e.*, seven and fourteen, which the merchants of old generally adopted in completing a fleet, was perhaps due to the notion that these numbers were auspicious. A merchant before undertaking a voyage used to perform certain ceremonies.<sup>1</sup>

আর ডিঙ্গাখান তোলে নামে শঙ্খচূড় ।

আশীগজ পানীভাঙ্গে গাঙ্গের হুকুল ॥

আর ডিঙ্গা তুলিলেন নামে চন্দ্রপাল ।

যাহার গমনে হইকুল করে আল ॥

আর ডিঙ্গা তুলিলেন নামে ছোটটিমটি ।

যাহে ভরা দিল চল বায়ান্ন পউটি ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণ, পৃঃ ১৯১ ।

<sup>1</sup> See Sen's *Folk-Literature of Bengal*, Calcutta University, pp. 73-75.

The following among others constituted the crew of a ship :—

1. Gābar (sailors, consisting of two classes) : (a) Māñjhi or oarsmen, (b) Dāri or Kaṇadhār (helmsmen).
2. Sutradhar or Carpenter.
3. Kaṛmakār or blacksmith.
4. Pāik or foot-soldiers.
5. Dubāri or diver.
6. Mirbahar or admiral.
7. Kārikar or craftsmen.
8. Kārāri or helmsman and captain.

Gābar—a sailor. The caste from which boatmen were generally recruited is still known as Gābar in Bengal. They were exceptionally sturdy and the term ‘Gaithyārgābar,’ applied to them, signifies great physical strength. The sailors used to sing a chorus called Sāri when plying their oars.<sup>1</sup> The sailors were mainly recruited from East Bengal.<sup>2</sup>

Sutradhar—carpenter.<sup>3</sup> Carpenters’ services were required for repairs and the joining of parts; these carpenters supplied the necessary crew corresponding to an engineering staff maintained on board a modern ship. Carpenters were essential for European ships when steamships were not in vogue.

Kaṛmakār—blacksmith. Blacksmiths were engaged in building a ship and as their services were considered indispensable, they were taken on board the ships.

Pāik—foot-soldiers. They were taken in perhaps owing to insecurity of the age to protect merchandise from any

<sup>1</sup> See Satyanārāyaṇer Puñthi, edited by Abdul Karim and Manasāmaṅgal poems.

<sup>2</sup> See Kavikaṇkaṇ, pp. 198 and 207-8. The Gābars used ‘Daṇḍa (helm), Dāñḍa Kerwāls (oars), Bañśakerwāls (bamboo-poles) and Fāns (chords) to ply the vessels.’ See Kavikaṇkaṇ, pp. 194, 195, 207, 227, 228, 229, 234 and 236.

<sup>3</sup> For Carpenters see Anson’s Voyages and Discoveries (published by the Everyman Library).



possible attacks of pirates or hostile foreigners.<sup>1</sup> Mention has been made of the Telugu soldiers employed by the Bengalis in the *Manasāmaṅgal* and the *Dharmamaṅgal* poems.

*Dubāri*—divers. They accompanied the sea-going merchant vessels to ascertain if there was anything wrong in that part of a vessel which remained under the water.<sup>2</sup>

*Mirbahar*—admiral. It is an abbreviation of the Arabic term *Amir-al-Bahar*, meaning an admiral of a fleet. The admirals would not only use warships but also armed merchantmen as appears from the description of *Chānd's* voyage for trade. In *Baṅśīdās* we find Admiral *Gopāl* accompanying the carpenters in their voyage in quest of *Manapaban* wood perhaps to guard them against any possible attack, a precaution which was considered necessary to provide against the insecurity of sea-voyage.

From the descriptions that one comes across in the works of our poets it appears that the merchandise carried in Bengali vessels was mainly intended for export to *Pātan* and *Singhal*. A system of barter was generally resorted to and fraud<sup>3</sup> played by the Bengali merchants on foreigners of questionable civilization, furnished a stock of humour and fun to our poets, on which all of them wrote in the same strain. We find occasional mention of merchandise, wherein the prices are sometimes ludicrously exaggerated, for during the time when these works were written, sea-voyage was reduced to a vague tradition in which fact and fiction were hopelessly blended together. Still we give below two lists which may be found interesting as they no doubt contain some elements of truth. According to *Baṅśīdās*, it was the

<sup>1</sup> See *Baṅśīdās*, p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> See *Baṅśīdās*, p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Chañḍikāvya* by *Kavikaṇṭha* (the character of *Murāriśīla*) and the story of *Śaṅkhamālā* by *D. R. Majumdār*.

Bengali merchants who introduced cocoanuts and betels in some foreign countries, but this seems to be a myth.

*First List.*

| Items of Bengali Merchandise.                             | Articles of Foreign Countries.                 |
|---|--|
| (1) Betel-leaves in exchange of                           | Ten emeralds for each leaf.                    |
| (2) Betel-nut „   | Ten gems.                                      |
| (3) Lime „  | Quick-silver.                                  |
| (4) Catechu „   | Gorachanā (a bright yellow pigment).           |
| (5) Cardamom „  | Pearl.   |
| (6) Satābari Kāmeśwar<br>( <i>Asparagus racemosus</i> ) „ | Musk.  |
| (7) Fruits „  | Golden bricks, bells, etc.                     |
| (8) Vegetable-roots „                                     | Diamond.                                       |
| (9) Pulses „  | Corals.  |
| (10) Onions and garlies „                                 | Maces.   |
| (11) Camphor „  | ‘Bākhar.’                                      |
| (12) Water-weeds „  | Diamond.                                       |
| (13) <i>Dolichos gladiatus</i><br>(Mākhanā) „             | Ruby.  |
| (14) Goats and sheep „                                    | Gold.  |
| (15) Radish „   | Ivory.   |
| (16) Dry fish „   | Sandal-wood.                                   |
| (17) Sugarcane „  | Royal maces (Nabadanda,<br>symbol of royalty). |
| (18) Jute „   | Chowrie (Chāmar).                              |
| (19) Wooden utensils „                                    | Gold and silver utensils.                      |
| (20) Wooden furniture „                                   | Golden furniture.                              |
| (21) Earthenwares   | Bell-metal utensils.                           |
| (22) Oil and clarified<br>butter                          | Quick-silver.                                  |

## Items of Bengali Merchandise.

## Articles of Foreign Countries.

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| (23) Kuṁkum in exchange of | A jar full of honey.    |
| (24) Poppy                 | „ Strings of gold-bell, |
| etc.                       | etc.                    |

For a reference to the above list, see Baṅśidās, pp. 380-390 and 392-393 (D. Chakravartī's ed.).<sup>1</sup>

*Second List*

## Items of Bengali Merchandise.

## Articles of Foreign Countries.

- |              |                |  |
|--------------|----------------|--|
| 1. Deer      | in exchange of | Horse.   |
| 2. 'Biraṅga' | „              | Clove.   |
| 3. Śuṇṭha    | „              | Taṅka—a kind of wood apple,<br><i>Feronia elephantum</i> . |
| 4. Ape       | „              | Elephant.  |
| 5. Pigeon    | „              | Suā (Parrot).  |
| 6. Fruits    | „              | 'Jāyfal.'  |
| 7. Bahara    | „              | Betel-nut.   |

আগে আনি গুয়াপান      থুইলেক বিত্তমান,  
মূল্য বলে কাঁড়ারী ছুলাই ।

একটা একটা পাণে,      মরকত দশ গুণে,  
গুয়াতে মাণিক্য যেন পাই ॥

বদল করিতে চুণ,      রস দিবা দশগুণ,  
থয়ার বদলে গোরচনা ।

সুগন্ধী এলাচি হালী,      লহ মতির বদলি,  
কেসর বদলে দিবা সোণা ॥

শতাবরী কামেধর,      আনি বলে সদাগর,  
এর গুণ কহিতে না পারি ।

খাইয়া বুঝ আগে,      কিমত আশ্বাদ লাগে,  
তৌলি দিবা বদলে কস্তুরী ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল, পৃ: ৩৮০-৩৯০ ও ৩৯২-৩৯৩ ।

## Items of Bengali Merchandise.

## Articles of Foreign Countries

|                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 8. Jute in exchange of | White Chowrie (Chāmar). |
| 9. Glass ,.            | Emerald.                |
| 10. Sea-salt ,.        | Rock-salt.              |
| 11. Dhuti (cloth) ,.   | Pots.                   |
| 12. Oyster-shell ,.    | Pearl.                  |
| 13. Haritāl ,.         | Diamond.                |
| 14. 'Joāni' ,.         | 'Jirā.'                 |
| 15. 'Chuā' ,.          | Sandal-paste.           |
| 16. Sheep ,.           | Horse.                  |

(See Kavikaṇṭha Mukundarām's Chāṇḍī-kāvya, p. 191—Dhanapati's exchange of merchandise in Ceylon.<sup>1</sup> The exchange of commodities seems to be somewhat more reasonable than that to be found in Baṇśīdās).

It is to be noted that there was a time when glass used to be exported from India. We learn the following in the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, pp. 220-221 (by W. H. Schoff, A. M., Longmans, Green & Co., 1912):—

“The origin of the glass industry in India is uncertain. According to Mitra, Antiquities of Orissa, I, 101, it was made in Ceylon in the 3rd century B. C. and Pliny (XXXVI,

|                     |               |
|---------------------|---------------|
| কুরঙ্গ বদলে,        | তুরঙ্গ পাব,   |
| নারিকেল বদলে শঙ্খ । |               |
| বিড়ঙ্গ বদলে,       | লবঙ্গ পাব,    |
| শুঠের বদলে টঙ্ক ॥   |               |
| লবঙ্গ বদলে,         | মাতঙ্গ পাব,   |
| পায়রা বদলে শুয়া । |               |
| পাটশন বদলে,         | ধবল চামর পাব, |
| কাচের বদলে নীলা ॥   |               |
| লবণ বদলে,           | সৈন্ধব পাব,   |
| জোয়ানী বদলে জিরা ॥ | ইত্যাদি ।     |

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য, পৃ: ১২১ ।

66) refers to the glass of India as superior to all others, because 'made of pounded crystal.' Mirrors, with a foil of lead and tin, were largely used at the time of the Periplus, and Pliny indicates (XXXVII, 20) that 'the people of India, by colouring crystal, have found a method of imitating various precious stones, beryls in particular.' An early play, the *Mṛcchhakaṭika*, or Little Clay-Cart, describes a scene in a court of justice to this effect (Mitra, 100 ; see also A. W. Ryder's translation, Cambridge, 1905).''

The Bengali merchants usually carried on trade with Ceylon and Pāṭan in Guzrat and visited the following ports :

1. Puri.
2. Kaliṅga or Kaliṅgaṭam.
3. Chilkāchuli or Chicācole in the Madras Presidency.
4. Bānpur.
5. Setubandha Rāmeswar.
6. City of Laṅkā (in Ceylon).
7. Nilaccā or Laccadives.
8. Pāṭan (in Guzrat).

One of the chief places outside India visited by the Bengali merchants was the Laccadives. Mention is found also of Pralamba, Nākuṭ, Aheelaṅkā, Chandrasalya island and Ābartana island which we cannot identify but which undoubtedly lay outside our country. A vivid description of the coasting voyage of the Bengali vessels from Saptagrām (an inland port of Bengal) to Pāṭan in Guzrat by doubling the Cape Comorin, is found in the *Manasāmaṅgal* poems of Baṁśīdās. In the *Chandrikāvya* of Kavikaṅkan Mukundarām we find accounts of mercantile adventurers of Bengal related in glowing terms. The lists of ports, both Indian and foreign, and the conditions of sea-voyage tally in both these works.

In Baṇśīdās we find the following description of the voyage of Chānd, the merchant. In spite of poetic fancy and exaggeration, a rough idea of the sea-routes and ports may be gleaned from it.

“The merchant started for south Pāṭan. There were great celebrations and festivities at the city of Champaka. All the ships started one after another. At the head of the vanguard was Admiral Gopāl with forty-two small vessels. After leaving his own territory Chānd passed through the following places in succession: Kāmārhāti, Madhyānagar, Pratāpgarh, Gopālpur and Rāmānagar. He then reached Kālidah-Sāgar which he crossed, leaving Gandharvapur to the right and Bīrnagar to the left. Then the merchant reached the mouth of the Ganges after passing through Kāmeśwar, Māndārerthānā, Pichalta and Rāmbiṣṇupuri one after another. At Gaṅgāsāgar Chānd performed worship and sacrificed goats. After leaving Champaknagar the ships were on the voyage for five months. The merchant passed through many difficult places after having reached the sea. He passed through Utkal and Kaliṅga on his right. Crabs, lobsters, leeches and crocodiles obstructed his passage through the malice of Manasā Devi. At last the merchant reached the Golden Laṅkā surrounded by golden walls. Chānd here saw the Rākṣasa king and received his passport before proceeding further. Then he left Laṅkā on his right and passed the Malaya mountain near Cape Comorin. He also passed Bijaynagar (Ceylonese?) then ruled by king Ahi. The next important place which the merchant visited was Paraśurāmtīrtha. Leaving this place the merchant reached the vast sea known as the Nīlaccārbunk (*lit.* bend of sea near Nilacca—perhaps Laccadives). Reaching this sea the crew felt giddy as they heard the deep sound of the waves which rose as high as mountains. They almost

lost their way but through the expert direction of Captain Dulāi the vessels were steered properly. It was by looking at the stars that Dulāi could keep to the right direction. After much trouble, the merchant Chānd and his companions reached the city of Pāṭan, then ruled by King Chandraketu.<sup>1</sup>

On Chānd's way back from Pāṭan, he crossed the Laccadives, then passed the Vindhya-ranges, Lankā, Setubandha-Rāmeśwar and reached Kālidaha-sāgar where he experienced a heavy storm.<sup>2</sup>

The above description leads us to the conclusion that Pāṭan, once a celebrated city in Guzrat, was frequented by the merchants of Bengal who reached the place by sea crossing the Bay of Bengal, part of the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. The voyage was probably a coasting one and Ceylon which stood midway between Bengal and Guzrat by the sea-route, was a favourite place of commerce for the merchants of Bengal. Pāṭan is not an inland city similar to Tāmralipti or Tamluk which was once one of the most important seaports of Bengal. Though Pāṭan means a city yet the frequent mention of this particular Pāṭan and the way leading to it, makes us think that it is no other than the Pāṭan or Somnāth Pāṭan of Guzrat, not a fanciful creation of our poets.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Baṅśīdās, pp. 318-339.

<sup>2</sup> See Baṅśīdās, pp. 396-399.

<sup>3</sup>

চলে সাধু দক্ষিণ পাটনে ।

চম্পক নগর মিলি,                      কৌতুকেতে ছলাছলি,

জয়ধ্বনি উঠিল গগনে ॥

হুলাই বলে বাও বাও,                      বন্দিয়া ভবানী পাও,

প্রথমে চলিল শঙ্খচূড় ।

ছোটঘটা তার পাছে,                      যাতে ভরা ভরিয়াছে,

হাঁড়ীপাগ ধুকুড়া বিস্তর ॥

It seems our merchants used to frequent the islands and ports of the Bay of Bengal to which reference has already been made in this chapter.

The following description is to be found in Bijay Gupta's Manasāmaṅgal (N. M. Sen Gupta's ed., pp. 194-195) :

- গোপাল মিরবর চলে ঠাট আশুয়ান ।  
তার সঙ্গে হাত নাও ব্যাল্লিশ থান ॥  
পানী চরি আগে চলে ব্যাল্লিশ নাও ।  
ঠাট পাছে চন্দ্রধর বলে বাও বাও ॥  
নিজরাজ্য ছাড়াইল হাত্ত পরিহাসে ।  
ছাড়ায় কামারহাটী আখির নিমিষে ॥  
মধ্যনগর কূল দক্ষিণে থুইয়া ।  
হুজুয় প্রজাপগড় ছাড়ায় বাহিয়া ॥  
ছাড়ায়া গোপালপুর রামনগর ।  
বাহিয়া আসিয়া পড়ে কালীদসাগর ॥  
ডাইনে গন্ধর্ব্বপুর বামে বীরাজনা ।  
কামেশ্বর বাইয়া যায় মান্দারের থানা ॥  
পিচলতা বামে রাখি যায় তাড়াতাড়ি ।  
সগুথে নগর দেখে রামবিষ্ণুপুরি ॥  
হরষিত হৈয়া পুছে রাজ্য চন্দ্রধর ।  
স্বরূপে কহরে ভাই একার নগর ॥  
প্রজা সবে বলে রাজ্য শ্রীরাম রাজার ।  
ডাকাচুরি নাহি এথা কোন পাপাচার ॥  
সাগর সঙ্গম এই গঙ্গা শতমুখী ।  
শিবের বাকে চৌদ্দ ডিঙ্গা রহিলেক ঠৌকি ॥  
\* \* \* \* \*  
ফলার করিয়া পুনি হরষিত হৈয়া ।  
দক্ষিণ পাটন বলি যায় ডিঙ্গা বায়া ॥ ইত্যাদি ।



“Oh merchants, listen. In the north King Mukteśwar reigns. It is very difficult to comprehend the ways of his people. They take the seeds of pepper for rice. The king of the east is known as Bidyāsaṅga. The greater the bulk of the person the more the respect is shown to him. The people are all degraded and the social customs are in a most pitiable condition. Marriage-laws are not at all strict as brothers often exchange their wives. Even a brother marries his sister in that land.\* The women enjoy complete freedom and use coloured cloth especially to cover the breast. Caste-system is not observed at all. In the west the people are barbarous. They bore their ears, seldom observe any caste-distinction and use ornaments on the neck. They do not give the girls in marriage unless they are sixteen and even then they put the married girl for some time in the priest's house in lieu of his fee. A married girl even keeps the house of her sister-in-law's (husband's sister) husband. In case of any child being born, it shares the property on both sides.<sup>1</sup> Now hear the condition of Pāṭan or the South Pāṭan. Its king is Bikram Keśarī. The people of this land are very rich. They keep jars full of gems. In their land conch-shells, pearls, etc., are abundant, as sea-waves fling them in large numbers on the shore in particular phases of the moon. Even the poor own oysters and pearls.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The peculiar customs regarding inheritance such as inheritance of nephews as found in Baṇṣidās are still prevalent among the Nairs of Madras side. The preservation of dead bodies mentioned in the same work gives us glimpses of customs prevailing among the Buddhists.

The above lines, though full of grotesque fiction, seem to contain some grains of truth. By the term 'the north' the poet perhaps indicates the foreign countries to the north-east of Bengal. From Chittagong onwards to China, people are fond of pepper and they take it in excessive quantity with their meal. By the term 'the east' the poet perhaps means the Buddhist Burma and the adjoining countries where owing to the influence of Buddhism caste-system is ignored and marriage-laws are less rigorous. The Burmese women are very fond of coloured garments.

পূর্ব দেশের রাজা নাম বিত্তাসঙ্গ ।  
 সে লোক সাধু তার যত বড় অঙ্গ ॥  
 পরস্পর যত লোক তমরূপে থাকে ।  
 ব্রাহ্মণ জাতি বসে যত সকলেই চন্দ্রকাটে ॥  
 জ্যেষ্ঠ ভাইর বধু করে কনিষ্ঠে বদলা ।  
 ভগ্নী লইয়া ঘর করে ভাইরে বলে শালা ॥  
 সকল জাতির নারী বেড়ায় দীর্ঘ ছান্দে ।  
 বিচিত্র বসন দিয়া ছুই স্তন বান্ধে ॥  
 সব জাতি একাচারি নাহিক আচার ।  
 ধর্ম্মাধর্ম্ম জ্ঞান নাই কুৎসিত আকার ॥  
 সে দেশের লোক সব অতি বড় ধনী ।  
 ডোঙ্গায় করিয়া রাখে মাণিক্য দোহারী ॥  
 অমাবস্তার পর তিথি আসে পূর্ণমাসী ।  
 ঢেউতে নিয়া শঙ্খ মুক্তা তোলে রাশি রাশি ॥  
 হাট কুড়াইয়া খায় হাটুরিয়া কান্দাল ।  
 পাটিতে করিয়া শুকায় মুক্তা প্রবাল ॥  
 এতেক শুনিয়া সাধুর আনন্দিত মন ।  
 নিশ্চয় কহিল যাব দক্ষিণ পাটন ॥  
 তথা হ'তে চান্দে ডিঙ্গা করিল গমন ।  
 চন্দ্রকেতু রাজার দেশে করে আগমন ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

Freedom of women is also allowed in Burma. The western country may possibly mean the Madras Presidency which lies to the south-west of Bengal. As regards Pāṭan, it may be said that it was a rich city or else the merchant vessels would not have been described as visiting the place for the purpose of trade.

Another account of the voyages of the Bengalis (as found in Kavikaṅkaṇ's *Chañḍīkāvya*, pp. 195-202) runs thus :<sup>1</sup>

“After the performance of the usual ceremonies before sailing, the merchant Dhanapati passed the following places : Bhowsinherghāt, Māṭīārisafar, Chaṇḍīgāchhā, Bolānpur, Purathan, Nabadwīp, Mirzāpur, Āmbuā, Śantipur, Guptipārā, Ulā, Khismā, Maheśpur, Fuliā and Hālisabar—all by the side of the Ganges. Then he reached the very celebrated inland port of Bengal known as Saptagrām near the Tribeni.” The poet here incidentally praised this port and gave it a superior place among the following ports and places (some of which are Indian and some foreign) known to the poet. They are the ports of “Kaliṅga, Trailaṅga, Aṅga, Vaṅga, Karṇāṭa, Mahendra, Magadha, Mahārāṣṭra, Guzrāṭ, Barendra, Vindhya, Piṅgal, Utkal, Drāviḍ, Rāḍha, Bijaynagar, Mathurā, Dwārakā, Kāśī, Kankhal, Kekaya, Purabak, Anayuk, Godābarī, Gayā, Sylhet, Kāmrup, Koch, Hāṅgar, Trihaṭṭa, Mānikā, Faṭikā, Laṅkā, Pralamba, Nākuṭṭa, Bāgar, Malay (Indian), Kurukṣetra, Baṭeśwarī, Ahulaṅkā, Śibaṭṭa, Mahānaṭṭa and Hastinā, etc.” According to the poet the merchants of the above places visit Saptagrām but the merchants of Saptagrām do never visit those ports and places (which prove the exaggerated notion of the poet about Saptagrām).

“At Saptagrām the merchant took on board sufficient quantity of drinking water for his voyage ; he then passed

<sup>1</sup> Only the gist of the Bengali passage is given here.

some other places of note by the river banks, such as Nimāitirtha, Betarah, Bāgan, Kālighāt, Omuliṅga, Chhatrabhoga, Kālipur, Himāi, Hetāgarh, Saṅketamādhaba, Madanmalla, Bīrkhānā, Kālihāṭi and Dhuligrām. On his way he encountered storm on the river Magrā. It took the merchant twenty days to reach the canal of Aṅgārpur. Then his vessels entered the sea adjoining the country of the Drāviḍas. The first place of note was Puri, celebrated for the temple of Jagannāth. Then the merchant visited Chilkāchuli or Chicācole. Next ports of note were Bālighātā and Bānpur which were soon left behind. They then reached the land of the Firinghees (Portuguese). They stealthily passed this place under cover of darkness at night as they were afraid of these people who were very strong in their fleet of warships which were known as the Hārmādā (Portuguese Armada, the Portuguese being very strong in ships in these parts). Dhanapati then passed some seas which were infested with crabs, snakes and crocodiles, etc., like Chānd. After much difficulty he reached Laṅkā. Before reaching Laṅkā, however, Dhanapati's vessels touched Setubandha-Rāmeśwar and crossed Kālidaha or Black-watered Sea.”<sup>1</sup>

1

দেবদ্বিজ গুরুজনে কৈল নমস্কার ।  
 হরি হরি বলি নোকা বাহে কর্ণধার  
 লহনা খুল্লনা স্থানে করিয়া মেলানি ।  
 বাহিয়া অজয় নদ পাইল ইন্দ্রানী ॥  
 ( ইন্দ্রপুরে পূজা দিল লয়ে পুষ্প পানি ।  
 বাহ বাহ বলি ডাকে সাধু গুণমণি ॥ )  
 ভাও সিংহের ঘাটখান ডাহিনে করিয়া ।  
 মাটিয়ারি সফর খান বামে এড়াইয়া ॥  
 সঘন কেরোয়াল পড়ে জলে বাজে সাট ।  
 এড়াইল চণ্ডীগাছা বোলনপুরের ঘাট ॥

It is peculiar that Kālidaha which Baṇśīdās mentions to be near Bengal, Kavikaṅkaṇ places near Ceylon. It may be that any expanse of blue sea was called by them 'Kālidaha.' As for the mention of Hārmādās, it may safely be said that they are matters of history. The Portuguese pirate-vessels were for some time the curse of the eastern seas.

স্বরা করি সদাগর দিবানিশি যায় ।  
 পুরথনের ঘাটখান বাহিয়া এড়াইয়া ॥  
 কোথায় রন্ধন কোথা চিড়াখণ্ড কলা ।  
 নবদ্বীপে উত্তরিল বেনিয়ার বাল্য ॥  
 চৈতন্ত চরণে সাধু করিল প্রণাম ।  
 সে ঘাটে রহিয়া করে রন্ধন ভোজন ॥  
 রজনী প্রভাতে সাধু মেলি সাত নায় ।  
 নবদ্বীপ পাড়পুর এড়াইয়া যায় ॥  
 স্বরায় চালায় তরি তীরের পয়ান ।  
 মৃঙ্গাপুরের ঘাটে ডিঙ্গা করিল চাপান ॥  
 নাইয়া পাইক গীত গায় শুনিতে কৌতুক ।  
 ডাহিনে রহিল পুরী আশ্রয়া মূলুক ॥  
 বাহ বাহ বল্যা ঘন পড়ে গেল সারা ।  
 বাম ভাগে শান্তিপুর ডাহিনে গুপ্তিপাড়া ॥  
 উলা বাহিয়া খিসমার আশে পাশে ।  
 মহেশপুর নিকটে সাধুর ডিঙ্গা ভাসে ॥  
 মহেশপুর সদাগর বাহিল তখন ।  
 ফুলিয়ার ঘাটে ডিঙ্গা দিল দরশন ॥  
 বামে হালিসহর দক্ষিণে ত্রিবেণী ।  
 যাত্রীদের কোলাহলে কিছুই না শুনি ॥

\* \* \* \*

কলিঙ্গ ত্রৈলোক্য অঙ্গ বঙ্গ কর্ণাট ।  
 মহেন্দ্র মগধ মহারাষ্ট্র গুজরাট ॥

In the voyage of Srīmanta, son of Dhanapati, we come across the names of two islands namely, Chandrasalya and Ābartana, both lying on the way to Ceylon. We cannot locate these islands as we cannot locate Bānpur *en route* to Chānd's voyage, for obvious reasons.

Though there is evidently much exaggeration about the size of the ships, it is quite probable that the vessels belonging to Bengali merchants were often of enormous size,<sup>1</sup> for the bulk of ships counted very much during those days.<sup>2</sup> The Bengali poets had some traditions of the past, to which they added much that they derived from their imagination. In one of the ballads of Mymensingh, it is mentioned that a vessel was called Kośā, because its length was two miles (a krośa). Of course, it is almost absurd to suppose that any vessel could be of such a monstrous shape, but it is not unlikely that in ancient times when there was a fashion in the civilised

এ সব সফরে যত সদাগর বৈসে ।

জঙ্গ ডিঙ্গা<sup>৩</sup> লয়ে তারা বাণিজ্যেতে আইসে ॥

সপ্তগ্রামের বেনে সব কোথায় না যায় ।

ঘরে বস্ত্রে সুখ মোক্ষ নানা ধন পায় ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

• — কবিকঙ্কণ মুকুন্দরামের চণ্ডীকাব্য, পৃঃ ১৯৫-২০২ ।

<sup>1</sup> As regards the possibility of Bengali vessels to be of enormous size so far as can be gleaned from hyperbolic poetic description, it should be noted that doubt is entertained by some eminent scholars and savants.

<sup>2</sup> For detailed information on ancient ship-building of Bengal which is still current to some extent in Chittagong, see among others an article on the above subject in the Bengali newspaper "Jyoti," dated the 17th Bhādra (1927 B.S.). See also Introduction to Mymensingh Ballads (Vol. 2, C. U. Publication) by Dr. Sen. For a detailed description of the river-crafts of Bengal see, among others, the illustrated article named "The Boats of the Ganges" by James Hornell, published in the "Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal," Vol. VIII, No. 3, pp. 173-198.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Chinese junks.

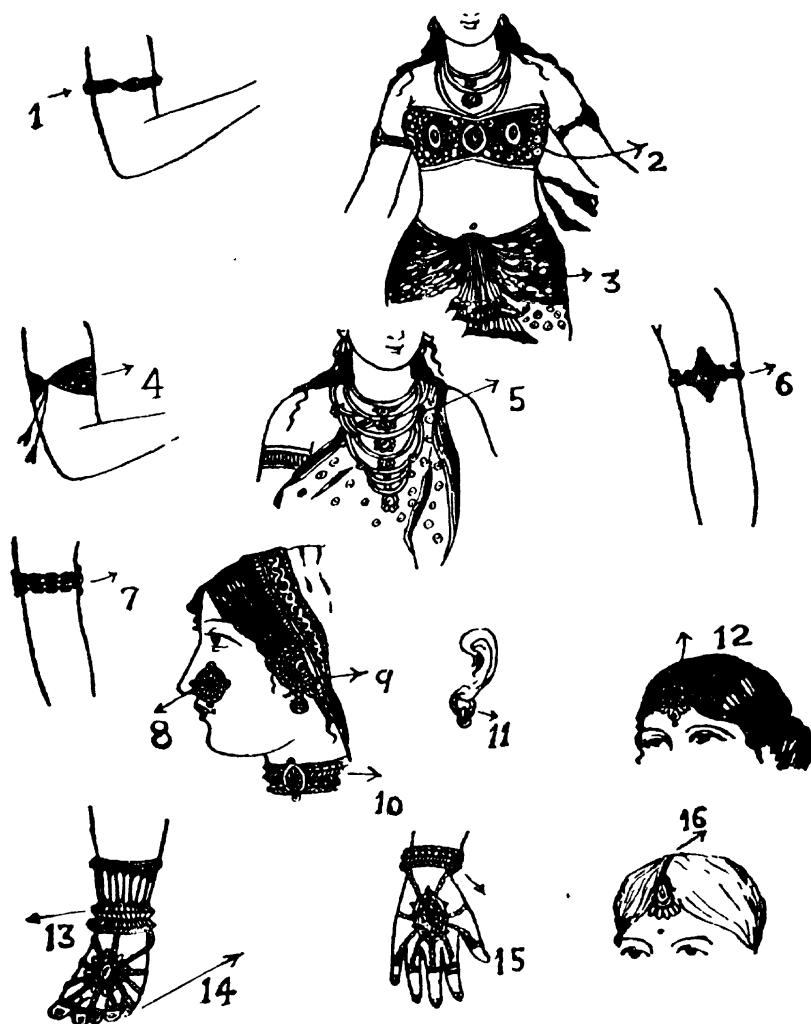
countries such as Egypt and Babylon, and as a matter of fact all the world over, in constructing huge and titanic vessels, a full fleet was sometimes made to cover a space of more than a mile, the tradition of which still lingers in the name of pleasure-boats, known as 'Kośā.'





# CHAPTERS III & IV

## COSTUMES AND ORNAMENTS



1. Tād
3. Nibibandha
5. Sātesari
7. Jasam
9. Kānbālā
11. Madan Cowri
13. Mal
15. Ratanchuḍ

2. Kānchuli (Corset)
4. Bāju
6. Keur
8. Besar
10. Gribāpatra
12. Sinthi
14. Unchat
16. Sinthi

## CHAPTER III

### COSTUMES

The costumes and ornaments of the old Bengali people were different in many respects from those used now-a-days by them. In this respect Bengal had more kinship with the North-Western India than we see it to have now. The illustrations given in the following pages are from works mostly written in the Mahomedan period though they will appear to represent things having a bearing on an earlier period.

*Aṅgarākhā*.—It was a kind of coat once favoured in Bengal and still in use in Rajputana, Gujrat and some other parts of Northern India. It was a military dress in the Hindu period and this may be understood from the fact that the Rajputs still commonly use it while other people such as Bāniās do so but rarely. The Rajputs used it with a breast-plate purely for military purposes, which might have served as 'kabach' or armour, of which we have frequent mention in our old literature. The *Aṅgarākhā* is now generally used as a purely civil dress. In Kotah (Rajputana) and Gujrat it is more commonly termed as Koriā. Koriā or *Aṅgarākhā* as used by them is a long garment reaching the knee-joint and instead of buttons it has fastenings in the neck and breast. With an additional fastening at the waist it constitutes a special type and is known as 'Bālābandi-koriā.' The cuff of the Koriā is generally loose though sometimes close-fitting when buttons are used. In Bengal its use is restricted,

being worn by old men in the remote corners of the province.<sup>1</sup>

*Kāñchuli*.<sup>2</sup>—A corset. It is still used in many parts of India, such as Behar, United Provinces, etc. In Bengal it was considered as a fancy dress by ladies even in the days of the Mahomedan rule. But it is no longer a favourite costume with them. Kāñchuli has two main types : one short—covering only the breast, and the other long—reaching down to the waist. The corset (Kāñchuli) is fastened at the back with ribbons. Reference to this garment has been made by Kānā Hari Datta, Chaṇḍīdās and a host of other writers, times without number. Old Kāñchulis bore beautiful artistic decorations—specimens of needle-work. For a description of these decorations we may refer our readers to the Dharmamaṅgal poems by Rupaṛām. Here we find Nayāni wearing a Kāñchuli, with exquisite needle-work decorations representing the ‘rāsa’ of Śrī-Kṛṣṇa. In Harivaṅśa by Dwija Bhawānī Dās we find the description of a Kāñchuli with the figures of Dasāvatāra on it. In Kavikaṅkaṇ’s description of a Kāñchuli we find the figure of Bhagawatī adorning the dress. The pictorial representations given by our poets are evidently exaggerated, but it cannot be denied that there is some truth in them. Specimens of beautiful representation of pictures are still available at Dacca, Benares and some other parts of Northern India.

<sup>1</sup> For Aṅgarākhā see the Dharmamaṅgal poems by Rāmanārāyaṇ, C. U. MS. No. 2454, Fol. 12,

অঙ্গে অঙ্গরেখি পরে দেখি লাগে ডর ।

(The General put on an ‘Aṅgarākhā’ and looked fierce.) See also Viśwakoṣa, Vol. I, p. 76, where it has been made synonymous with Sāñjoṣ signifying armour.

<sup>2</sup> For a description of Kāñchuli see Śrī-Kṛṣṇa Kīrtan among other works.

*Nībibandha*.<sup>1</sup>—A kind of belt used by women. Another kind of belt, not so fine and artistic as the *Nībibandha*, was made use of by men, and it was called *Paṭukā*. The belt had a string of small bells attached to it, from end to end, to keep up a jingling sound pleasing to the ears as the wearer moved about. Descriptions of women using *Nībibandha* when dancing and of men using *Paṭukā* when going to battle, are to be found in our old literature, such as the *Dharmamaṅgal* and *Manasāmaṅgal* poems.

An account of the different kinds of costumes used by people of different professions are given below :—

*A Brāhmaṇ*.<sup>2</sup>—The Dhuti and Chāddar of the priestly Brāhmaṇs are, of course, of hoary antiquity. Garments, such as shirts or coats were never used by them. The orthodox Brāhmaṇ priests would never use garlands or scents, specially when they were ‘ *Bratī* ’ or engaged in

<sup>1</sup> See *Manasāmaṅgal*, by Baṅśidās, p. 312,

নাভির উপরে পরে নীবিবন্ধ খানি ।

(She wore a belt in the waist above the navel.) See also *Rāmnārāyaṇ*, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13. For পটুকা see *ibid.*, F. 2.

স্বর্ণের পটুকা বাঁধে কোমরেতে আটি ।

(The commander tightened a golden belt around his waist.)

কোমরে পটুকা বাঁধে ।

(The commander tightened a belt around his waist.) See also Baṅśidās, p. 312. See *Rāmnārāyaṇ*, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13,

ঘন ঘন ঘুলুরেতে ঘেরিল কোমর ।

(Close-fitting bells surrounded the waist of the warrior.)

<sup>2</sup> See the *Mahābhārata* by Kāśīrāmdās, p. 269,

ব্রতী বিপ্র হৈয়া কেন হেন অনাচার ।

সুগন্ধি চন্দন মালা অঙ্গে সবাচার ॥

জ্ঞানী বিপ্র কভু মালা নাহি পরে গলে ।

(Why have you all overlooked the custom by wearing garlands and using scents and sandal-paste, inspite of the fact that you are all Brāhmaṇs as well as Bratīs? A wise Brāhmaṇ never wears a garland.)

observing austerities. (Chaitanya, when a young man, used scents and garlands as he was not a ' Bratī Bipra.')

*Yogī.*—An ascetic of the Yogī class used to shave his head, wear ' Kuṇḍals ' or earrings of copper, rub his body with ashes, put on a rag and carry a beggar's knapsack, a dry pumpkin-gourd and a stick. The most significant mark of a Yogī or a Yoginī was the use of a Kuṇḍal. This, however, was often used as a threat by people, offering as it did, a broad hint of his desire to turn a Yogī or Yoginī.<sup>1</sup>

*A merchant.*—The merchant community as well as the upper classes of the Hindus used rich garments according to their means. Coats were used perhaps on special occasions while a Dhuti, a Chāddar and a Pāgri constituted their usual costume.<sup>2</sup> Shoes of various descriptions including silver-shoes were used by persons given to luxury.

<sup>1</sup> See Govinda Chandra's song, slokas 645-646,

স্বর্ণের খুরেতে মুড়ায় মাথার কেশ ।  
কর্ণেতে কুণ্ডল দিয়া হইল জুগী বেশ ॥  
বিভূতি মাখিল গায় কটিতে কোপিন ।  
কাথা ঝুলি কান্ধে করি হইল উদাসীন ॥

(The king shaved his head with a golden razor, wore the costume of a Yogī with kuṇḍals or earrings and rubbed ashes over his body. He also wore the particular kind of cloth known as Kaupin. With rags and a beggar's knapsack on his shoulders he became a veritable ascetic.) See also Baṇśidās, p. 247,

লাউয়া লাঠি ঝুলি কাথা মাথে জটাতার ।  
ভগবান বস্ত্র পরি যোগীর ব্যবহার ॥  
তাম্র কুণ্ডল কমণ্ডলু করে ।

(He took the dry skin of a gourd, a stick, rags and a begging bowl with him. He also put on an ochre-coloured cloth and copper earrings as if a Yogī.)

<sup>2</sup> See Baṇśidās, p. 195,

পালকে চড়িয়া যায়,      পাটের পাছড়া গায়,  
পট্টাষরের বন্দি মাথায় ।

*A warrior.*—The dress of warriors in pre-Mahomedan period consisted of an armour, a helmet, a pair of trousers, a belt with jingling bells attached to it and shoes sometimes of velvet. Ordinary soldiers, however, did not use velvetshoes. A warrior would use armlet, bracelet and Nupura and rub his body with dust like that of the Mallas or wrestlers before being engaged in a duel. Long sticks were often carried by soldiers and these were known as ‘Rāibāns.’ In Maṇik Gaṅguli’s Dharmamaṅgal songs there is an animated description of the march of an army in full military dress.<sup>1</sup>

(The merchant Chānd started in a palanquin. He wore silk clothes and had a silken scarf round his head.) Also the same author writes elsewhere,—

রজত পাছকায় চাঁদ দিলেন চরণ ।

(Chānd put his feet into his silver-shoes.)

<sup>1</sup> See the Dharmamaṅgal poems, specially of Maṇik Gaṅguli for a description of a commander’s dress,—

শিরে রণটোপ স্বেচল গায়, খাসা মকমলি পাছকা পায় ।

(The commander had a helmet on his head, a good garment on his body and he wore an excellent pair of silver-shoes.) See also Rāmnārāyaṇ, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13,

পটুকা কোমরে বাঁধে গায় রান্ধা মাটি ।

(The warrior tied the girdle or belt round the waist and rubbed ochre-coloured dust on his body.) Again the same author writes—C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13.

ঘন ঘন ঘুঙ্গুরেতে ঘেরিল কোমর । অঙ্গে অঙ্গরেখি পরে দেখি লাগে ডর ॥

(The warrior put on his waist close-fitting bells known as Ghuṅgura and wore Aṅgarākhā which made him look fierce.) See Mādhavāchāryya’s Chāṇḍikāvya.

শিরেতে টোপর শোভে কটিতে কিস্কিনী ।

(The military ‘Ṭopar’ otherwise known as ‘Rāṇaṭop’ or helmet adorned the head and the bells adorned the waist of the warrior.) See Rāmnārāyaṇ,

তাড় বালা শোভয়ে হুপ্পুর শোভে পায় ।

(The Tāḍ or armlet and Bālā or bangles adorned the warrior’s arms and the Nupura made the feet look pretty.) See the Dharmamaṅgal poems by Rāmchandra Banerjee,

রায়বাইছা পাইক হাজার হাজার ধায় ।

(Thousands of soldiers armed with Rāibāns were on their march.)

*A cow-herd.*—He used a short stick (Pāchanbāḍi) and a piece of rope for managing his cows. He used a Pāgri and such ornaments as 'Tāḍ' (Armlet), Bālā (Bangles), Kuṇḍals (earrings), etc. He also used a Śiṅgā (horn) to call his companions and herds. The cowboys were very fond of garlands of field-flowers and specially those of Guñjā (*Abrus precatorious*). They often painted their faces with Alakū and Tilakā—marks of sandal-paste.<sup>1</sup>

*Female dress.*—The women ordinarily used 'Kāñchuli' (corset), 'Oḍṇā' (a sort of thin wrapper), Sādī with an underwear and Nibibandha with 'Kiñkiṇī' or Ghuṅgura.

<sup>1</sup> See Gītaratnāvalī, pp. 70-71.

(a) আওত শ্রীদামচন্দ্র রঙ্গিয়া পাণ্ডুর মাথে ।

(The cow-boy Śrīdām comes forward with a red turban on his head.) Again,

(b) গলে লম্বিত গুঞ্জামালা, ভুজে অঙ্গদবালা ।

গোষ্ঠাদন ডোড়ি কান্ধহি, কাণে কুণ্ডল যেলা ॥

(The cow-boy had the garland of *Abrus precatorious* on his neck and armlets and bangles on his arms. He had also Kuṇḍals or earrings on his ears and he carried a rope on his shoulders to bind the cows.) See Mukundamaṅgal by Haridās.

(c) শিঙ্গারবে সঙ্গি সবে সঙ্কেত করিয়া ।

(He started giving signal to his companions by blowing the horn.) See Goṣṭha by Balarām Dās in which a cow-boy's dress has been thus graphically described :—

(d) অঙ্গে বিভূষিত কৈলা রতন ভূষণ ।

কটিতে কিঙ্কিনী ধটি পীত বসন ॥

কিবা সাজাইল রূপ ত্রিভুবন জিনি ।

পুষ্পগুচ্ছ শিখিপুচ্ছ চূড়ার টালনি ॥

চরণে নুপুর দিলা তিলক কপালে ।

চন্দনে চর্চিত অঙ্গ রত্নহার গলে ॥

(A cow-boy's dress adorned the person of Kṛṣṇa. He wore jewels and yellow, coloured cloths. He had a necklace on his neck, 'Kiñkiṇī' on his waist and 'Nupura' on his feet. His person looked exceedingly fine when he wore a bunch of flower with a peacock's feather arranged slantingly on his head, put 'Tilak' mark on his forehead and rubbed sandal-paste on his body.)

In the sixteenth century and even earlier, the Bengali women probably used Kochā (the tuck of the lower garment which hangs loosely in front of the Sādī). The up-country and Mārāthi women still preserve the display of a 'Kochā' in front of their Sādī though it is not prevalent at present among the Bengali women. It may be said that stray references to the use of 'Ghāgrā' is found in our old literature such as the Maynāmatī songs and the Vaiṣṇava padas. In 'Kṣitīśa Vaṅśāvalīcharit' too, we find mention of the occasional use of Ghāgrā by ladies in the family of Rājā Kṛṣṇachandra of Nadia. All these illustrations tend to prove that Ghāgrā was rather used in Bengal as an exceptional dress and came into vogue in this country in the pre-British period owing to the Mahomedan influence and the etiquette then prevalent in the country. It had never commanded universal use, perhaps on account of the climatic condition of this country. Ghāgrā is still used in North-Western India and this may be due to the close association of the people of that province with the Mahomedans on account of the latter having had their power most strongly established there. The Vaiṣṇava poets of Bengal used the word Ghāgrā probably to indicate the idea they conceived of the Braja-Gopīs of Vṛndāvan.<sup>1</sup>

N. B.—Vaiṣṇavas out of their tender feelings for the cows would not use the word 'bāndhā,' but they use the softer word 'chhādan,' instead, hence the word in the above quotation (b).

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Coomarswami and Mr. Arun Sen consider the following, in their translation of Vidyāpati :

"Skirt—Ghāgrā—not now a separate garment but that part of the Sādī which forms a skirt. But in Vidyāpati's days the costume of Bengali women seems to have been that of Western Hindustan (skirt, bodice, veil) familiar in Rājput paintings. In this case 'Nībibandha' is actually the skirt-string (p. 177, notes)."

They further remarked that "Nībibandha is not properly a separate garment." We think that their comments are applicable only to the case of Mithilā, the land



Men and women of old used incense (Dhup) to dry and to scent their hair. For scents, the women used Kuṅkum, Aguru (*Aqualaria agolucha*, Aloe), sandal-paste and scented oil named 'Nārāyaṇ Taila' and 'Viṣṇu Taila.'<sup>1</sup> Though the use of soap (Sanskrit फेनक) is found in Sanskrit works of Suśruta and Bātsyāyana, its use was perhaps either unknown or forgotten in Bengal during the period under review. In place of soap myrabolans were in use.<sup>2</sup> The practice of using musk and sandal-paste was prevalent among both the sexes.<sup>3</sup> Śauṅkha or shell-bangles, collyrium

of Vidyapati and not of Bengal. From a perusal of our old literature it seems doubtful whether Nibibandha was not a separate garment.

For the use of Sāḍī with an underwear by the Bengali ladies see Jadunandan Dās 'The Toilet of Rādhā,'

সুন্দর রক্তবস্ত্র ধনি ভিতরে পরিল ।

তাহার উপরে নীল বসন ধরিল ॥

(The beautiful girl wore a thin red cloth as an underwear over which she put on a blue-coloured Sāḍī.) See also Chāṇḍīdās' Khaṇḍitā,

নীল পাটের শাট কোচার কুলনী ।

(The blue silk Sāḍī had a 'kocā' with it.)

<sup>1</sup> See Manasāmaṅgal by Jagat Jiban Ghoṣāl,

নারায়ণ তৈল, বিষ্ণু তৈল কেশের গোড়ে দিয়া ।

(Using Nārāyaṇ Taila and Viṣṇu Taila in hair.) See also Śuṇyapurāṇa by Ramāi Pandit and the Manasāmaṅgal poems by Keṭakā Dās for a description of the use of Nārāyaṇ Taila. See also the Manasāmaṅgal poems by Dwijā Rasik for a description of the use of Kuṅkum and sandal-paste,

কুঙ্কুম চন্দন গন্ধ কাপড়েতে কয় ।

(The cloth diffuses the odour of Kuṅkum and sandal-paste.)

<sup>2</sup> See Kṛttivāsi Rāmāyaṇ,

সখী দেয় সীতার মস্তকে আমলকী ।

(The maid uses myrabolans to cleanse Sītā's hair.)

<sup>3</sup> See Kṛttivāsi Rāmāyaṇ,

সর্বদেহে লেপিয়া দিল সুগন্ধি চন্দন ।

(The whole body was besmeared with the sweet-scented sandal-paste.) See also the pada by Vāsudev Ghosh,

and vermilion <sup>1</sup> were indispensable to married women with husbands alive in former days, as Śaṅkha and vermilion are even now. The sandal-mark (Tilak) on the forehead was essential in the Hindu period as the peculiarity of marking indicated the particular sect of a person. The painting with sandal-paste and musk was sometimes done by way of luxury and this was called 'Patra-rachanā' (lit. leaf-painting).<sup>2</sup> In it the leaves were not the only things that were represented on the cheek, forehead and the breast. The painting *Alakā* and *Tilakā* were very common.<sup>3</sup> This painting was afterwards practised as a regular art and the ingredient of the paint consisted of sandal-paste, Haritāl (yellow orpiment),

কস্তুরি চন্দন করি ঘরিশণ, গাঁথিয়া ফুলের মালা ।

(Rubbing the musked sandal-paste on the body and preparing a flower-garland.)

<sup>1</sup> See Jāgaraṇa (Chandikāvya) by Mādhavāchāryya, Vaṅgasāhitya Parichaya, Vol. I, p. 334 :—

(i) সরস লাভণ্য শঙ্খ হাতে পরিধান ।

(She had on her arms fine shell-bangles.)

(ii) সীমন্ত কপালে শোভে সুরঙ্গ সিন্দূর ।

(Bright-coloured vermilion adorned the forehead and the hair-parting.)

(iii) কুরঙ্গ চঞ্চল আঁখি রঞ্জিত কজ্জলে ।

(Her deer-like roaming eyes were coloured with collyrium.)

Besides, see Manasāmāṅgal by Keṭakādās Kṣemānanda and Dharmamaṅgal by Ghanarām for Śaṅkha and vermilion.

<sup>2</sup> See Jadunandan Dās,

কস্তুরির পত্রাবলী লিখিল কপালে ।

(The forehead was painted with musk.) And Rāy Basanta,

মৃগমদ চন্দন তিলক নবকুসুম পত্রাবলী নিরমাণে ।

(The figures of newly sprouted leaves and flowers and Tilak mark were painted with the help of musk and sandal-paste.)

See Padāvalī by Govinda Dās,

অলকা তিলকা দেহ ।

(Paint Alakā and Tilakā marks.)

Manahsilā (realgar) or Gorochanā (a bright yellow pigment).<sup>1</sup>

In our old literature such as Māṇikchandra Rājār Gān, the Manasāmaṅgal poems and others we find mention of cloths of various descriptions<sup>2</sup> such as 'Pāṭer Pāchhrā' and Khuṇā (ordinary silk cloths), 'Chaṭak Dhuti, Maṭak Dhuti' (silk cloths of Assam), 'Āgun Pāṣāḍī' and 'Megh-Dambur,' 'Meghnāl' and 'Gaṅgājali Sāḍī.' Gaṅgājali Sāḍī means that the cloth looked white and transparent like the water of the Ganges on account of its fineness and superior quality. Similarly Meghnāl Sāḍī of the Maynāmatī songs and Megh-dambur Sāḍī of Kavikaṅkaṇ were named after the blue cloud for the resemblance of their colour with that of the cloud. 'Maṭak Dhuti' had perhaps some similarity with the Maṭkās of Assam. In all probability these Maṭkās used to be imported into Bengal from Assam. There were embroidery and picture decorations in garments.<sup>3</sup>

A close study of the old Bengali literature makes it clear that the mode of wearing cloth and Pāgri was just the same in our country as is now prevalent in the up-country districts.

<sup>1</sup> See Bātsyāyana's 'Kāmasūtra,' a Sanskrit work, for a detailed account of the above.

<sup>2</sup> See among others the Manasāmaṅgal poems by Jagat Jiban Ghosāl (17th century) for Sāḍīs of very fine fabric with such picturesque names as Yātrāsīd (auspicious starting), 'Māñjā Phul' (a kind of white flower), etc.

<sup>3</sup> See Baṇśīdās (D. Chakravartī's edition),

উত্তম উড়নৌ দিয়া সৰ্ব্বাঙ্গ ঢাকিয়া ।

তাতে বস লিখিয়াছে শুন মন দিয়া ॥

(Her entire frame was covered in a fine wrapper with beautiful paintings on. Listen to what these paintings were about.)

## CHAPTER IV

### ORNAMENTS<sup>1</sup>

The use of the following ornaments was in vogue in Bengal, many of which have now grown obsolete :—

(i) *Sinhi*.<sup>2</sup>—This is still used in some parts of Bengal and nearly everywhere in India by women as a head-ornament. It consists of three gold strings two of which run from ear's end joined at the centre by another which goes straight along the hair-parting. In Rajputana it is called 'Śirbandi.'

(ii) *Beśar*.<sup>3</sup>—In rural Bengal it is called 'Nākhhabī'—a nose-ornament. It resembles a small semi-circle and is worn by women.

(iii) *Kuṇḍal*.<sup>4</sup>—A kind of earring formerly used by both sexes. It was generally made of gold inlaid with pearls.

<sup>1</sup> References to ornaments and attire will be found in D. C. Sen's *Vaṅga-Sāhitya Parichaya* (Vols. I & II) pp. 210, 227, 260, 286, 334, 335, 372, 385, 486, 667, 829, 907, 1223, 1291, 1293, 1294, 1295, 1519, 1520, 1521 and 1794. (See also *Glimpses of Bengal Life* by D. C. Sen, pp. 41-45.)

<sup>2</sup> See the *Padāvalī* by Govinda Dās—Abhisār,

চিত্রা সময় জানি, স্নবর্ণের সি থি আনি, যতনে দেয়ল সি থিমুলে ।

(The maid Chitrā brought a golden Sinthi and put it tenderly on Rādhā's head between the hair-parting.)

<sup>3</sup> See *Padāvalī* by Jñānadās,

নাসার বেশর পরশ করিয়া ঈশৎ মধুর হাসে ।

(She touched the nose-ornament Beśara and smiled a graceful smile.)

<sup>4</sup> See the *Gītaratnāvalī* (B. Sāhā's collection), p. 70,

শ্রবণে কুণ্ডল সাজে ।

(The Kuṇḍals or earrings decorate the ears.) Also p. 97,

অলকা তিলকা ভালে, কানে মকর কুণ্ডলে ।

In Bengal the original form of this ornament has been modernised and is now known as earring. The old and original form, however, still exists in some parts of Northern India.

A special kind of Kuṇḍal was known as the 'Makar Kuṇḍal' as it resembled the head of a Makara—a kind of fabulous sea-fish. Latterly, however, this pattern was replaced by others—but the name itself was not changed. The present Bengali epithet 'Mākri' given to a particular kind of earring may have derived its name from this 'Makar Kuṇḍal.' A peculiar kind of Kuṇḍal which is now used in the up-country districts is commonly known as 'Chowdāni.' It was once used in Bengal, but not in our days.

(iv) *Kānbālā*.<sup>1</sup>—An ear-ornament otherwise known as 'Chakrāvali,' worn on both ears. Chakra or Chāki was a sort of earring exquisitely decorated with pearls and fixed on to the upper part of the ear. The 'Vali' practically covered the whole ear surface. Between the 'Chakra' and the 'Vali' another ornament known as 'Hīrāmaṅgal-kaḍi' or 'Madan-Kaḍi' was also used. Chakrāvali is still worn by Marwari women of Rajputana.

(On the forehead there were the marks of Alakā and Tṭakā and in the ears the Makar-kuṇḍals.) See also Kuśi Dās's *Mahābhārata*, *Virāt Parva*, p. 542, D. C. Sen's edition,

মকর কুণ্ডল দিল কবচ উত্তম ।

(A pair of Makar-Kuṇḍals and an excellent armour were given to him.) Also *ibid*, *Adiparva*, p. 38,

পৌষ্য নৃপতির স্ত্রীর শ্রবণ কুণ্ডল ।

(The earrings of the wife of king Pausya.)

<sup>1</sup> See the *Manasāmaṅgal* poems by Jagatjīban Ghoshāl,

উপর কর্ণে ঢাকি পরে লম্বা কর্ণে বলি । তাহার মধ্যে শোভা করে হীরামঙ্গল কড়ি ।

(r) *Hār*.<sup>1</sup>—A necklace. Frequent mention of a peculiar kind of *Hār* known as *Śateśwari* is to be found in our old literature. Along with *Hār* another sort of neck-ornament was used, known as ‘*Gribāpatra*’.<sup>2</sup> It fitted the neck closely above the necklace, like a collar. It is still used in Bengal and is known as ‘*Chik*’ and ‘*Hānsuli*.’ At present the use of ‘*Hānsuli*’ is rather limited as the lower grades of the Mahomedans only seem to favour it. But this ornament was used by Hindu ladies in ages long gone by as will be evident from stone images of gods and goddesses with *Hānsuli* on, built in the 11th and 12th centuries and even earlier.

(vi) *Aṅgada*.<sup>3</sup>—All ornaments for the upper parts of the arms were known as *Aṅgada*. A few of these are noticed below :—

(On the upper part of the ears there were the ‘*Chākis*’ and below them lengthwise were the ‘*Valis*’ and in the middle the ‘*Hirāmaṅgal Kaḍis*’.) See *Chandīdās’s Śrī-Kṛṣṇakīrtan*, p. 112,

কাণের হীরাধর কড়ি ।

(The ornament *Hirādhār Kaḍis* of the ears.)

<sup>1</sup> See *Chandīdās’s Śrī Kṛṣṇakīrtan*, p. 88,

ছিড়িয়া পেলাইব বড়াই সাতেসরি হার ।

(I shall tear off the *Sātesari* necklace, oh old lady.) See the *Pada* by *Bhupati Sīṅha*,

বেসর খচিত শতেশ্বরী পরিল ।

(She wore the nose-ornament *Beśara* and the necklace *Sateśwari*.)

See also *Kavikaṅkaṇ-Chandī* (C. U. edition), p. 313.

*N.B.*—Were there two varieties of necklaces so far as their coils were concerned *e.g.*, seven-coiled (সাতেসরি) and শতেশ্বরী (hundred-coiled) ?

<sup>2</sup> See *Baṇṣidās’s Manasāmaṅgal*, ‘*Uṣār-Beś*,’

গলে পরে গ্রীবাপত্র মুকুতার বলী ।

(She put on her neck the ornament *Gribāpatra* which was studded with pearls.)

<sup>3</sup> See *Jadunandan Dās, Śrī Rādhikār Beśabinyās*,

স্বর্ণাঙ্গদভূজে দিল বিশাখা আনিয়া ।

(The maid *Biśākhā* brought the gold armlet ‘*Aṅgada*’ and put it on *Rādhā’s* arms.)

(a) *Tāḍ*.<sup>1</sup>—A pair of plain gold bands about two inches in breadth used on the upper parts of the arms. This ornament was not only used by women but by men as well. *Tāḍ* is otherwise known as *Tāgā*. Its use is now almost obsolete in our country, it having been replaced by 'Ananta' (a nicely decorated armlet).

(b) *Keyūr*.<sup>2</sup>—An ornament for the arms used by both the sexes. 'Keyūr' was a sort of gold band with nice decorations on. It is a very old ornament and a reference to it is to be found in old Sanskrit works written when the Aryans did not yet settle in Bengal and Assam.

(c) *Bāju*.<sup>3</sup>—An armlet otherwise known as 'Bāju-bandha.' In the villages of Bengal, especially of Eastern Bengal, it is still continuing its existence though feebly amongst women and children; formerly it was made use of by adult males too. It is generally worn high up on the right arm in Bengal but it is sometimes used on both the arms in Behar and in the United Provinces. *Bāju* is a sort of thick band of gold with engravings on and tied to the arm with a string.

<sup>1</sup> See *Baṅśidās*, p. 312,

তাড় বাহুটী আর সুবর্ণের চূড়া ।

(The ornament known as *Tāḍ* or armlet, *Bāhuṭī* or bangles and gold *Chud* or a type of bracelet.) See also *Gītāratanāvalī*, the *Chandrikāvya* by *Mādhavāchāryya*, etc., etc.

<sup>2</sup> See *Govinda Chandrer Gītā*, *Slokas* 704-05,

খসাইয়া ফেলে হার কেয়ূর কঙ্কণ ।

(She put off the necklace *Hār*, the armlet *Keyūr* and the bangles *Kaṅkaṇ*.) See also *Bṛndāban Dās's Muralī Śikṣā*,

তুমি লহ কঙ্কণ কেয়ূরী ।

(You do take the armlets and the bracelets.)

<sup>3</sup> See *Chandrāvalīr Punthi* (*Baṭṭalā* ed.),

.....তাড়, বাজু.....কেয়ূর, কঙ্কণ, পরাইল দুই হাতে ভুবনমোহন ।

(The two arms were decorated with the ornaments *Tāḍ*, *Bāju*,.....*Keyūr* and *Kaṅkaṇ*.)

(d) *Māduli*.<sup>1</sup>—An armlet, It is almost similar to Bāju with this difference that it contains more decorative work and is less thick. Other names of this ornament are Tābij (by which name it is known in Eastern Bengal) and Kabach. Another variety of this ornament is known as Jaśam which consists of double rows of Māduli and is more commonly used in the rural parts of Bengal.

The order of the different types of Aṅgada by which they are to be worn is summarised below: First (nearest armpit) is worn Māduli, then comes Bāju, then Tād and Jaśam and finally Ananta closes the list.

(vii) *Ratanchūd*.—A bracelet. It has three distinct parts each having a different name of its own. The upper part is known as সরল (Sarala), middle part as চুড় (Chūd) and the forepart as কঙ্কণ (Kaṅkaṇ).<sup>2</sup> Sometimes this Kaṅkaṇ, otherwise known as Balaya or Bālā, was used as a separate ornament. In Saral a ring of pearls or precious stones was set. Adorned with floral decorations the Chūd was a nicely worked ornament. Chūd without Saral and Kaṅkaṇ are still used. A kind of bracelet known as Bāhuṭi<sup>3</sup> was also used. It is even now favoured by the up-country women. A kind of shell-bracelet (*Lakṣmībilās Śaṅkha*<sup>3</sup>) which was once popular has now become out of fashion. With Kaṅkaṇ was connected a pair of precious

<sup>1</sup> See Jadunandan Dās's Śrī Rādhikār Veśavinyās,

সুবর্ণ মাদুলি অতি শোভিয়াছে করে ।

(The gold armlets added to the beauty of the arms.)

<sup>2</sup> See Kṛttibāsi Ramayaṇa,

শঙ্খের উপরে সাজে সোণার কঙ্কণ ।

(Above the shell-bracelets adorned the gold bracelets or Kaṅkaṇ.)

<sup>2</sup> and <sup>3</sup> See Baṇśidās,

কঙ্কণ বাহুটী করে লক্ষ্মীবিলাস শঙ্খ পরে ।

(Gold Bāhuṭi or bracelet was worn on the wrist above the Lakṣmībilās Śaṅkha or shell-bracelet.)



strings and another ornament for the back of the palm, known as Hātpadma. In the middle of the back of the palm was set an exquisitely beautiful ruby in a golden lotus with open petals. This was fixed to the rings worn on all the fingers.

(viii) *Khāḍu*.—Silver anklets. A peculiar kind of this ornament, known as Magar-Khāḍu,<sup>1</sup> was in use among both the sexes. In Chaṇḍīdās another kind of Khāḍu has been mentioned. It was called 'Malla-Toḍar.'<sup>2</sup>

We find also mention of Baṅkarāj Pātā or Bāṅkpātā-Mal<sup>3</sup> in our old literature.

(ix) *Unchhaṭ*<sup>4</sup> otherwise known as Ujjhaṭikā. It is now popularly known as 'Pāsuli.' It was a kind of ring for the toes of the feet. In our old literature frequent mention of Ujjhaṭikā is found.

<sup>1</sup> See Bijay Gupta,

ছোট ছোট বালকের মগর খাড়ু পায় ।

(Little boys wore anklets known as Magar-Khāḍu.) See also Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-Kīrtana of Chaṇḍīdās, pp. 79, 302.

<sup>2</sup> See Chaṇḍīdās

রাতুল চরণে মল্লতোড়র ।

(On the beautiful feet adorned the anklets Malla-Toḍar) See also Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-Kīrtana, p. 381.

<sup>3</sup> See Chandrāvalī Punthi, p. 199,

বাঁকপাতা মল পায় ।

(There were anklets in the feet known as 'Bāṅkpātā-mal.') Rādhā in her fine frenzy was described in a Pada by Baṅśibadan to be wearing Baṅkarāj Pātā on the breast.

হিয়ার উপরে পরে বঙ্করাজপাতা ।

(Rādhā wore the anklets Baṅkarāj-pātā on the breast through mistake, owing to her excess of emotion for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.)

N.B.—In Midnapore side the ornament is popularly known as Bāṅk-mal (বাঁকমল) or Bāṅk-mahala (বাঁকমহল). In Balasore side Orissa it is known as Bāṅki (বাঁকি) or Bāṅka (বাঁক).

<sup>4</sup> See Jadunandan Dās's Śrī-Rādhikar Veśabinyās,

পায়ের উপরে রত্ন উজ্জাটিকা দিল ।

(On the toes of the feet rings made of precious gems were fitted.)

## CHAPTER V

### CULINARY ART

The culinary art once attained a high degree of perfection in this country. It was systematically cultivated by the Hindu women and even the ladies of rank took pride in cooking and thus we find a Sanakā<sup>1</sup> and a Khullanā<sup>2</sup> preparing a hundred palatable dishes.

In ancient time a knowledge of the culinary art in a girl was more appreciated than any other attainments. It was owing to the peculiar condition of domestic life in the Hindu society and the part allocated in it to women that they acquired efficiency in the art and learnt how to cook innumerable articles of food. Due regard was always paid to the ordinary rules of hygiene in preparing these dainties.

In 'Dāker Vachan,'<sup>3</sup> composed between the 8th and 12th centuries A.D., we find mention of curries, plain and simple, being composed mainly of vegetables, bearing a striking contrast to the subsequent rich dishes of meat and onion of the Mahomedan period. In Māṇikchandra Rājār Gān and in other writings of the pre-Mahomedan period mention of fifty dishes was very common.

<sup>1</sup> See Sanakā's cooking in the *Manasāmaṅgal* poems of Baṇśidās (16th century).

<sup>2</sup> See about Khullanā's cooking in the *Chandikāvya* of Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām (16th century). There are very interesting items of curries in various places of the work.

Among other instances may be mentioned Surikṣā's cooking in Maṇik Gāṅguli's *Dharmamaṅgal* poems and Sita Devi's cooking in Chaitanya *Charitāmṛta* (*Madhyakhanda*).

<sup>3</sup> See 'Randhan Prakarṇ' in *Dāker Vachan*.

Some of the dishes of this period, the preparation of which seems to be forgotten in our days, are enumerated below :

(i) *Sītā Miśrī*.—It was a sort of crystallised sugar made by the following process :<sup>1</sup>—

“ The juice of sugarcane is boiled first. At that stage dregs appear on the surface in the form of froths, which when removed the sugar gets condensed. It is known as ‘*Raja Guḍ*.’ It is then made into ‘*Modak Guḍ*’ or ball-shaped raw sugar which again is kept in a jar having an

<sup>1</sup> See *Sahaja Upāsanaḥ Tatva* :—

দেখ বেন ইক্ষুরস দ্রবের সমান ।  
 অনলের জোগে দেখ হয় বর্ণ আন ॥  
 দেখ জেন ইক্ষুদণ্ড নিষ্পীড়ন করি ।  
 অগ্নী আবর্তন করে অতি যত্ন করি ॥  
 অনলের জোগেতে বিরাগ জে উঠয় ।  
 বিরাগ নিশ্চল হএ রজগুড় হয় ॥  
 সেই গুড় মোদকেতে পুন লৈয়া জায় ।  
 গাঞ্জ জোগ দিয়া পুন বিকার ঘুচায় ॥  
 গাঞ্জ জোগ শাঙ্গ হৈলে ভুরা তার নাম ।  
 ষষ্ঠ্যগ্নীতে পুনরোপী করএ শুথান ॥  
 অনলে চাপায় পুন দিএ দ্রব জোগ ।  
 নিশ্চলতা হয় তার জায় গাদরোগ ॥  
 যুক্তবর্ণ হয় রশ নাম তার চিনী ।  
 তন্তুপর ভিআনেতে ওলালাধুখানি ॥  
 পুন দ্রব জোগ দিএ তাহার ভিয়ান ।  
 অথগু লড্‌কা হয় মিশ্রী তার নাম ॥  
 তার পর দ্রব যোগে ভিয়ান করয় ।  
 সীতা মিশ্রী নাম তার নির্বিকৃত হয় ॥  
 অথগু মধুর রশ সীতামিশ্রী নাম ।  
 হেমবর্ণ বরিষন হয় অবিরাম ॥

opening at the bottom. Through this hole the liquid portion leaks out. At this stage the upper part of the jar is broken and a kind of vegetable leaf commonly known as 'gānj' is put on the surface. Owing to the chemical action, the raw ingredients of sugar become more refined. But it is yet somewhat coarse and is called 'Bhurā.' At this stage, the sugar is kept in the sun for some time and is then boiled with milk. This process makes the sugar milk-white purging it of the coarse substance. This refined sugar is again boiled and made into small balls which now become very white and are called the 'Olālāṇḍu' or 'Lāḍḍu.' These are boiled once more with milk and formed into lump. It is next finally boiled with milk and now the preparation of 'Sītā-miśrī' or the yellow-coloured crystallised sugar is complete."

(ii) 'Indramithā' and 'Ālfā' seem to have been once very common. They are not perhaps known now. 'Indramithā' was an article of food (a sort of sweet) of great delicacy.<sup>1</sup> 'Ālfā' was a kind of sweetmeat mentioned in the Padāvalī of Chanḍiḍās.

(iii) Goat-meat with the soft roots of banana plant were made into a relishing preparation.<sup>2</sup>

(iv) 'Gāḍarer Chām' (sheep-skin) seems to have been a dainty. In the Manbhum district even the upper classes, we hear, take the skin of sheep, goat, etc., down to the present day as they relish the fat beneath the skin.<sup>3</sup>

(v) 'Dugdha-Kuṣmāṇḍa,' or a combination of milk and gourd is now perhaps an obsolete dish though once very popular.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vide Māṇikabandha Rājār Gān.

<sup>2</sup> Bijay Gupta, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> Vide Bijay Gupta, p. 94, and Baṇṣiḍās, p. 289.

<sup>4</sup> Vide Kavikaūkaṇ Mukundarām, p. 157.

(vi) 'Dugdha-Kusumbhā' was another kind of favourite preparation.<sup>1</sup> It consisted mainly of milk and *Cannabis sativa* or opium. It still constitutes a dainty in Rajputana where it is taken on occasions of festivity.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Bhāratchandra's *Annadāmaṅgal*, p. 73; also *vide* *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 390.

## CHAPTER VI

### PASTIMES

The old literature of Bengal abounds with interesting descriptions of pastimes proving the masculine vigour and joy of rural life. Among these pastimes the *Chaugān* play attracts our attention as being specially a favourite with the upper sections of our community.

The game of Chaugān used to be played with much vigour.<sup>1</sup> The word Chaugān is of Persian origin, from 'Chau'—a crooked stick and 'gān'—a field. The Chaugān

<sup>1</sup> See Ālāol's *Padmāvatī*, pp. 121-122 :

সিঙ্গল দেশের যত রাজার কুমার ।  
বাছি বাছি দিল মক্ষ দশ আছোয়ার ॥  
রত্নসেন দিগ হস্তে জুগি দশজন ।  
চোগান খেলিতে হৈল অশ্বে আরোহণ ॥  
তুইদিগে চারি খুঁটি আনিয়া গাড়িল ।  
মদভাগে আরোপিয়া গাড়িয়া ফেলিল ॥  
মিশামিশি হই সবে লাগিল খেলিতে ।  
সকলে চাহন্ত নিতে আপনার ভিতে ॥  
সিঙ্গলের অর্ধবার গুলি নিতে চায় ।  
চোগান বৈলিয়া জুগি গোলা পল্টায় ॥  
গেরুয়া বেড়িয়া শব্দ উঠে ঠনাঠনি ।  
দ্বারে থাকি দেখে রত্নসেন নৃপমণি ॥  
ইবং হাসিয়া নৃপ আসিয়া ত্বরিত ।  
গেরুয়া মারিয়া দিল সিঙ্গলের ভিত ॥

was played on horseback with stick and ball. It was played just in the same way as the Polo is done at the present day. Moreover, the Polo originally came from Persia where the *Chaugān* used to be played and it may, therefore, be surmised that it took the name of Polo (from Tibetan 'Pulu') afterwards, as it travelled down

সিঙ্গল কুমার সবে খেলায় চতুর ।  
বেলাবারি হানিয়া গেরুয়া কৈল দূর ॥  
পুনি বলে খেরি খেলি অশ্বগুলি সঙ্গে ।  
শায়করি নিয়া যাও নিজ মনোরঙ্গে ॥  
পাছে পাছে অশ্ব লইয়া ধায় জুগিগণ ।  
ফিরাইতে নারে কেহ করিয়া জর্ভন ॥  
জুগিগণ বলে গুরু কি কর্ম করিলা ।  
আপনা হস্তের খেরি পরহস্তে দিলা ॥  
তুমি হেন মহারাজ সংসার মাজার ।  
আমা হৈতে গুলি নিতে শক্তি আছে কার ॥  
হাত হৈতে গুলি গেলে আর নাহি আশা ।  
গুরুর চরণ মাত্র করিও ভরসা ॥  
আমরা না জানি হেনমতে খেলা ভাও ।  
আপনে করিয়া জত্ন গুলি পালটাও ॥  
গুরু বলে শুন শিষ্য আমার বচন ।  
দড়ভাবে খেলা খেল হৈয়া একমন ॥  
পরহস্তগত যদি হইল গেরুয়া ।  
ফিরাইতে পারে যেই সেই সে থেকুয়া ॥  
শিষ্যগণ সঙ্গে নৃপ এতেক করিতে ।  
সিঙ্গলের পরে গুলি নিল নিজ ভিতে ॥  
তখন সকল লোকে মনে ভাবিলেক ।  
সিঙ্গলের অশ্ববারে খেলা জিতবেক ॥  
খুটার নিকটে নিজ করিবারে হাল ।  
জুগিগণে গেরুগুলি রাখিল তৎকাল ॥

to India *via* Tibet. Bengal is directly indebted to Manipur for its introduction into this country.<sup>1</sup>

In Ālāol, we get the following description of the same, which gives a clear idea of the manner in which it was played.

Two parties (the Sinhalese and the Yogis), each consisting of ten riders, stood facing each other. It was the aim of each party to drive the ball through the goal-posts of the other.\* At first one party stood on the defensive. When the latter approached the goal of the former ( দুই খুটি মধ্য দিয়া গুটি নিতে চায় ) with hard riding, the defending party lost courage. But their goal was saved by the tact and agility of the goal-keeper (King Ratna Sen of the party) who sent the ball to the opposite party with a

দুই খুটি মন্ধে দিয়া গুলি নিতে ছায় ।  
 চোগান ঠেলিয়া জুগি গুলি পাষ্টায় ॥  
 খুটি বেড়ি ছইদলে করে হানাহানি ।  
 রত্নসেন নৃপ তবে মনে মনে গুণি ॥  
 বিজলি চটকে প্রবেশিয়া মহামতি ।  
 চলিলা গেরুয়া লই অলক্ষিত গতি ॥  
 বেলাবারি হানি গুলি দূরে চালাইল ।  
 পাছে পাছে শীঘ্রগতি অশ্ব দাবাইল ॥  
 আর পাছে অশ্ববার ধাইল তুরিতে ।  
 নৃপতির শিক্ষা কেহ না পারে লক্ষিতে ॥  
 ছাটের উপরে ছাট অশ্বরে চাপিয়া ।  
 চলিল নৃপতি তবে গেরুয়া লইয়া ॥  
 ডাইনে রাখিয়া গুলি বলে খেলাখেলি ।  
 শীঘ্র দূর কল্প রত্নসেন মহাবলি ॥  
 লক্ষিতে নারিল দিঙ্গলের অশ্ববার ।  
 এইমতে জুগিয়া জিনিল তিনবার ॥

(See also Baṅśidās, p. 276, for the game Chaugān.)

<sup>1</sup> Vide Encyclo. Brit., Vol. 22, pp. 11-12.



hard stroke from his stick. The opponents received the ball in right earnest and again furiously charged the other party when it seemed that none could save the situation. Suddenly the goal-keeper checked the progress of the ball. With a wonderful dash he charged his opponents and in their confusion sent the ball right through their goal-posts, thus defeating the assailants with much smartness and vigour.

The main point to be considered in the game is the throwing of the ball through the opponent's goal-posts.

In Polo the same thing is also done. The way in which one party defeated the other as mentioned in the *Padmāvati* (চলিল নৃপতি তবে গেরুয়া লইয়া) shows that in *Chaugān* there was no offside as in the Polo. As from *Chaugān* perhaps comes the Polo, so from the Polo perhaps comes the Hockey, Golf and Cricket.<sup>1</sup> The *Chaugān* might also be the origin of our indigenous 'Dhopbāri,' a sort of rural hockey played with a crooked bamboo-stick and ball in the district of Mymensingh (Bengal).

(ii) Next to *Chaugān*, the *Geru* play may be mentioned. *Geru* means a ball (Prākṛit, গেৰুঅ). It used to be played by a number of boys in which the throwing of the ball by a party against the opponent and the catching of it by the latter constituted the main point of interest.<sup>2</sup> The play is still current in Bankura and some other parts of West Bengal.

(iii) There was once a game current in Bengal by the name *Duāpati*. The play might be the same as or similar to the 'Dābākhelā' of the present day.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Encyclo. Brit., Vol. 22, pp. 11-12.

<sup>2</sup> See the *Padāvali* by Chāṇḍīdās,

ফুলের গেরুয়া লুফিয়া ধরয়ে সঘনে দেখায় পাশ।

C. U. MS. No. 292, Fol. 2.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Maināmatī* songs (11th-12th century).

(iv) The Dharmamaṅgal poems give us a clue to the method of wrestling and its popularity in bygone days.<sup>1</sup>

In wrestling it had always been the custom to rub the body of the wrestler with the dust of the play-ground, this dust being known as 'Bīrmāṭi.' The 'Mallas' or wrestlers would, after tightening the cloth round their loins and a rope known as the 'wrestlers rope' (Mallador) round their heads, rub their bodies with this grey dust before the game starts. There were professional wrestlers generally recruited from the lower class people as the line কৃষ্ণ কলেবর কান্তি মূর্ত্তিমান কাল would signify. Here is an account of a wrestling contest described by a poet.

"At first the combatants sat crouching, exhibiting the strength of their arms, in the course of rubbing their bodies

<sup>1</sup> Vide The Dharmamaṅgal poems of Ghanarām, pp. 79-82 :

বচনে বচনে বড় বাড়িল বিবাদ ।  
 ভূতলে আছাড়ি ভুজ ছাড়ে সিংহনাদ ॥  
 আড়ম্বর করি দৌহে মাথে বীরমাটী ।  
 অমনি উঠিয়া লক্ষ উলটি পালটি ॥  
 মালসাট মারি দৌহে হাতাহাতি যুঝে ।  
 ঘোর শব্দ উঠিছে আছাড়ে ভুজে ভুজে ॥  
 মস্ত গজে গজে যেন বাজে মহাযুদ্ধ ।  
 রণ-ধূলে অবনী আকাশ হ'ল রুদ্ধ ॥  
 সেইরূপ সমরে সমান রোষাক্ষি ।  
 মহাযুদ্ধে মাথায় মাথায় চুসাচুসি ॥  
 বাহু কসাকসি কুশি ঠেলাঠেলি যায় ।  
 চঞ্চল চরণ গতি ছান্দে পায় পায় ॥  
 অমনি আছাড়ে ফেলে সিংহনাদ ছাড়ি ।  
 পাছাড়ি পাছাড়ি ভূমে যায় গড়াগড়ি ॥  
 সেন মহাপ্রতাপ মালের বসে বৃকে ।  
 মূটকি মারিতে তার রক্ত উঠে মুখে ॥

with earth, and all the time kept shouting out challenge to each other (বচনে বচনে বড় বাড়িল বিবাদ। ভূতলে আছাড়ি ভুজ ছাড়ে সিংহনাদ). Then suddenly both of them jumped up and caught hold of each other's arms. Each tried hard to subdue his adversary and in the attempt of doing so every part of the body of each came in close contact with that of the other. Interlocking of arms, knocking of heads—all formed parts of the contest (বাহু কসাকসি কুঁষি ঠেলা ঠেলি যায়। চঞ্চল চরণ গতি ছান্দে পায় পায়). After hard struggle, one of the wrestlers (Lausen) got the better of the other whom he knocked down upon the earth and sitting upon his breast continued dealing heavy blows on him till he spat out blood.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the Dharmamañgal poems by Sitārām Dās, C. U. No. 2171, F. 10, for an elaborate description of wrestling. See also the Dharmamañgal poems by Mānik Gāṅguli (ed. by H. P. Shāstrī and D. C. Sen), pp. 44-45.



# CHAPTER VII

## WARFARE



1. Parasu
2. Yamadhār
5. Pāśa
7. Mudgar
9. Śakti

2. Yamadhār
4. Trisula
6. Tāngi
8. Khetaka
10. Jāthā

## CHAPTER VII

### WARFARE

The picture of a Bengali soldier as depicted in our old literature such as the *Sivāyanas*, the *Chandīkāvya*s, the *Dharmamaṅgals* and the *Manasāmaṅgals*, is a curious medley, combining the elements of the Hindu as well as of the Mahomedan periods. This was due to the circumstances that the majority of the writers who have left us accounts of warfare of the Hindu period lived at a time when the country was under Mahomedan rule. Undoubtedly the older traditions continually changed as is apparent from the works of writers of successive ages, and the oldest specimens of the above-named works are now almost rare in the process of continuous modernisations of the songs, as they were sung from generation to generation. As regards weapons used by warriors we have quite a long list of them in these works including, among more formidable ones, the various kinds of fire-arms, 'Rāibānś', battle-axe, etc. ; along with these there is, of course, a mention of other ordinary and perhaps primitive weapons of warfare.

Some of the old weapons are described below :—

(1) *Paraśu*.—A kind of battle-axe which was perhaps in use in ancient warfare from time immemorial. Another slightly different type of this weapon was also used and was known as 'Paraśwadha.' The *Paraśu* consisted of a 'thin stick with a broad mouth.' The shape of the axe attached to the handle resembled a crescent. The battle-axe used

locally was known as the 'Tāṅgi.' The Aryan Paraśu,<sup>1</sup> inspite of some similarity, must have been originally different from the non-Aryan Tāṅgi,—the very non-Sanskritic name of the axe, Tāṅgi, carries its history with it. More than one Tāṅgi was used by a warrior who used to fasten them to his belt, on his left.<sup>2</sup> A type of Paraśu was known as the Paṭṭīś which had a very sharp point.<sup>3</sup> Paṭṭīś has been described in Gustav Oppert's celebrated work 'The Weapons, Army Organization and Political Maxims of the Hindus,' p. 21, as a battle-axe. In Europe, the battle-axe was a very popular weapon in the middle ages.<sup>4</sup>

(2) *Yamadhār* (Sanskrit 'Yamadraṅgstrā'?).—A kind of double-edged (from 'Yama' both) heavy sword, very popular in ancient time. It used to be kept hanging by a warrior in his belt on his right.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Sivāyaṇa* by Rāmeśwar, p. 65 :

‘ডাবুশ, পট্টিশ, পরশু, পরশ্বধ খরতর বরিখে ভুরি’ :

(The weapons Dābuś, Paṭṭīś, Paraśu and Paraśwadha were all hurled against the enemy.)

<sup>2</sup> See the *Dharmamaṅgal* poems by Ghanarām, p. 202 :

‘বাম দিকে যুগল টাঙ্গি যম অবতার’ :

(On the left there were a couple of fierce-looking battle-axes.) See also the *Dharma-maṅgal* poems by Rāmnārayaṇ, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13,

‘প্রবল পুরুষ বান্ধে টাঙ্গি খান তিন’ :

(The commander tied three huge battle-axes to his waist.)

<sup>3</sup> For a description of Paṭṭīś, see *Sivāyaṇa* by Rāmeśwara, p. 65,

‘পরশু পট্টিশ কার পেটে দিল পিঠে’ :

(The Paraśu and Paṭṭīś were thrust into the abdomen of the enemy by his opponent during the battle.)

<sup>4</sup> See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, Vol. 2, p. 585 (Arms and Armour). In ancient Rome the Roman Lictors always carried axes with them.

<sup>5</sup> Sometimes more than one *Yamadhār* were used by a single person in a battle. See the *Dharmamaṅgal* poems by Ghanarām, p. 202,

‘ডানভাগে বাঁধিল যুগল যমধার’ :

(3) *Neñjā*.<sup>1</sup>—A short spear or javelin. It was wielded by the right hand. (Cf. The Roman Pilum or javelin. It was carried on an iron rod of about 20 inches in length.)

(4) *Śulfi* or *Śūl*.—A spear. A spear with three points or prongs was known as *Triśūl* or trident.<sup>2</sup>

(The warrior tied a pair of Yamadhārs to the belt on the right side.) See the Dharmamañgal poems by Rāmnārāyaṇ, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 2 and 12. The ancient Roman soldiers used this double-edged sword. 'We gather from the monuments that in 1st century B. C. the Roman sword was short, worn on the right side (except the officers who carried no shield), suspended from a shoulder-belt (balten) or a waist-belt (Cingulum) and reaching from the hollow of the back to the middle of the thigh, thus representing a length of from 22 inches to 2 feet. The blade was straight, double-edged, obtusely pointed on the Trajan's column (A.D. 114); it is considerably longer and under the Flavian Emperors, the long single-edged Spatha appears frequently along with the short sword.' *Vide Encyclo. Brit.*, Vol. II, 11th Ed., p. 585. The sword found at Micenae are two-edged, of rigid bronze and as long as three feet or even more; from representations of battle it would seem that they were perhaps used for thrusting mainly. *Ibid*, p. 583. In the Phalanx of the Macedonians the sword that was used was straight, sharp-pointed, short, sometimes less than 20 inches and rarely more than 2 feet long. It was double-edged and used for both cut and thrust. *Ibid*, p. 584.

<sup>1</sup> See the Dharmamañgal poems by Rāmnārāyaṇ, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13,

‘ডানি হাতে নিল নেঞ্জা বাম হাতে বাঁশ’ :

(The warrior took in his right hand a *Neñjā* and in his left hand a *Rāibāns*.)

Cf. The Assagai or Assegai of the South African tribes. It is ‘a slender spear of hard wood, tipped with iron, some for hurling, some for thrusting with—used by the South African tribes, notably the warlike Zulus.’—Chambers, T. C. Dictionary, p. 55. See also the *Chapdikāvya* by Kavikañkaṇ Mukundarām, p. 46,

‘কোঁটা দিয়া বিকে রেজা, ছাড়িতে শিখায় নেঞ্জা, চামের টোপর শোভে শিরে’ :

(The warrior wore a leathern head-dress and marked a spot at a distance for practising the art of hurling a javelin.)

<sup>2</sup> See the *Chapdikāvya* by Mādhavāchāryya,

‘অস্ত্র শুল্কি হাতে’ :

(The warrior had a spear in his hand together with other weapons.) The spear was much in use among the Mycenaeans. In the Mycenaean age ‘the Mycenaean soldiers carried apparently a bronze spear.....It would appear only the chief warriors used spear and shield.’ See *Encyclo. Brit.*, 11th Ed., Vol. 2, p. 583.

In ancient mythology of Greece and Rome ‘a kind of scepter or spear with three prongs, the common attribute of Neptune, the deity of the Ocean’ (Roman



(5) *Rāibānś*.—A kind of stick or staff and was once a favourite weapon of the infantry known as the *Pāiks*.<sup>1</sup>

(6) *Kārmuk*.—A bow, one of the most important weapons of ancient warfare. The quiver was commonly called *Tarkach* (*cf.* Sanskrit *Tunir* <sup>2</sup>). There was a peculiar sort of arrow called *Chiād*.<sup>3</sup> Though literally the word means an arrow with four points it really was applied to any arrow with more than two points. An arrow with two points was known as the *Doād*.<sup>4</sup> *Chiādi* is a diminutive form of *Chiād*, signifying a small arrow. In a battle the bow

*Antiq.*). "A three-pronged spear used in the contest of gladiators by the *Rotiarius*."—W. Smith (from Webster's Dictionary).

<sup>1</sup> See the *Chandikāvya* by Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām, p. 94,

‘বাজন নূপুর পায় বীরঘটা পাইক ধায় রায়বীশ ধরে খরশাণ’ :

(The infantry wearing jingling *Nūpurās* on their feet and wielding sharp *Rāibānś* with their hands rushed on bravely to the battle.) *Cf.* "In Roman antiquity a *Lictor* was an officer who bore an axe and *fusces* or rods, as ensigns of office."—Webster.

<sup>2</sup> See the *Dharmamaṅgal* poems by Rāmnārāyaṇ, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13,

‘তীরসহ তরকচ তুরিতে বান্ধে ভাল’ :

(The warrior hastily equipped himself with the quiver, full of arrows.)

<sup>3</sup> See *Ghanarām*, p. 202,

‘চক্চক্ চিয়াড়ে পাটন পাঁচ শির’ :

(The dazzling arrow had five points.)

<sup>4</sup> See *Kavikaṅkaṇ*, p. 96,

‘দোয়াড় চিয়াড় বাণ করবাল খরশাণ’ :

(There were arrows with two points and arrows with many points and sharp swords.)

See also *Kavikaṅkaṇ*, p. 52,

‘মহাবীর চিয়াড় চাপড়ে করে রণ’ :

(The hero fought with a bow and arrows.) *Chāpaḍ* meant a bow. See also *Kṛttibāsa's Rāmāyaṇa*, *Uttarakāṇḍa*, p. 151, *Sāhitya Pariṣat* Ed.

‘দুর্জয় ধনুক হাতে কাণ্ড বে চিয়াড়ি’ :

(The hero had an invincible bow in his hand and arrows—all with more than two points—in his quiver.) *Kāṇḍa* or *Kāḍ* in the sense of arrow is still current in

used to be carried by a soldier in his left hand.<sup>1</sup> Like the battle-axe, the bows and arrows were once very popular in Europe also. The cross-bowmen of England were once very famous in Europe.<sup>2</sup>

(7) *Bhūṣaṇḍī* or *Muṣaṇḍī*.—An octagon-headed club. It had 'broad knots, a broad body, and a good handle for the fist.' It was three cubits in length and of the colour of a cobra. It was noted for two chief movements, namely, 'jerking and the whirling.'<sup>3</sup> There was also another kind of this club, the *Bhindivāla*, which was of a crooked shape. We find in Gustav Oppert's work (p. 13) the following translation from the *Nītiprakāśikā* by Vaiṣampāyan about this weapon: 'The *Bhindivāla* or *Bhindipāla* (a crooked club) has a crooked body; its head which is bent and broad

the colloquy of the districts of Bankura, Manbhum and Burdwan. See also *Kavikaṇkaṇ*, p. 96,

‘জোড়ে চৌখণ্ডী কাঁড়’ :

(Fitted an arrow with four heads.)

<sup>1</sup> See the *Dharmamaṅgal* poems by Rāmnārāyaṇ, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 12,

‘বাম হাতে বিরাজিত বিচিত্র কাণ্ডুক’ :

(In the left hand of the hero there was the nice-looking bow.)

<sup>2</sup> See *Encyclo. Brit.*, 11th Edn., Vol II, Arms and Armour.

<sup>3</sup> See "The Weapons, Army Organizations and Political Maxims of the Ancient Hindus" by Gustav Oppert. See also *Nītiprakāśikā* (a Sanskrit work by Vaiṣampāyan, IV, slokas 51. See also *Kavikaṇkaṇ*'s *Chañḍikāvya*, p. 75,

‘ভূষণ্ডী, ডাবুশ খরশান’ :

(The weapons called *Bhūṣaṇḍī* and the sharp *Dābūś*.) Cf. 'The mace of Areithous, mentioned as a unique example by Nestor' (*Iliad*, VII, 141). In England after the Norman conquest a knight sometimes carried a mace with him together with an axe. See *Encyclo. Brit.*, 11th Edn., Vol. II, pp. 584-85.

N.B. "The Eastern mace is wellknown to English collectors; it is always of metal, and mostly of steel, with a short handle like our facetiously called "life-preserver." The head is in various forms, the simplest a ball, smooth and round, or broken into sundry high and angular ridges like a melon, and in select weapons shaped like the head of some animal, bull, etc. "See Night DCXLVI." (The story of Judar and his Brethren, Footnote, *Arabian Nights* by Richard F. Burton, Vol. VI, p. 249, Luristan Edition.)

is one cubit long and it is one hand in circumference. It is first whirled thrice and then thrown against the foot of the enemy. When throwing the Bhindivāla, the left foot should be placed in front.”<sup>1</sup>

(8) *Khetaka* (otherwise known as Charma or Dhāl).—A shield.<sup>2</sup> It was chiefly made of the hide of rhinoceros and buffaloes (*cf.* the Athenian Pelta). These shields were of various sizes and shapes with figures wrought on them.<sup>3</sup>

(9) *Pās*.—A noose. The ancient *Pās* or noose afterwards developed into *Gāmchhā* with which the Thugees (ordinarily called the band of *Gāmchhāmōrās*) used to strangle their victims. The *Pās* once formed one of the weapons of the God *Varuṇa* and the Goddess *Durgā* and often figured in the description of the Bengali poets of old.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Gustav Oppert's "Weapons, Army Organization and Political Maxims of the Ancient Hindus." See also Rāmdās Sen's work on the subject named 'Bhārat Rahasya.' See also Kavikaṅkaṇ's *Chandikāvya*, p. 94 (Baṅgabāsi ed.).

<sup>2</sup> See Kavikaṅkaṇ's *Chandikāvya*, p. 267 (Baṅgabāsi ed.),

‘খেটকধরা ঘর্ষনাদিনী’

(The Goddess *Durgā* having deep voice was the wielder of *Khetaka* or shield.)

<sup>3</sup> See Rāmnārāyaṇ's *Dharmamaṅgal*, C. U. MS. 2154, F. 12,

‘গুপ্তার ঢাল পিঠে’ :

(On the warrior's back there was the shield made of rhinoceros's skin). And also Kavikaṅkaṇ's *Chandikāvya*, p. 75,

‘কিনিল মহিষা ঢাল’ :

(The soldier bought a shield made of the skin of a buffalo.)

See *Indian Iconography* by Gopinath Rao. See also the *History of the Art of War* by C. Oman and *Encyclo. Brit.*, 11th Edn., Vol. II, Arms and Armours, for details of European shields, from which the following is quoted :—‘The round Argolic shields of Greece and the oblong Roman shields introduced with the Punic wars were once very famous. For general reference on these weapons, see also among others, the article named ‘প্রাচীন হিন্দু জাতির যুদ্ধ বিজ্ঞা’ by Chandīdās Majumdār Vidyāratna, published in *Vikāś* of Falgoun, 1330 B. S., and quoted in the *Pravāsi* of Āṣāḍh, 1330 B. S.

<sup>4</sup> See Kavikaṅkaṇ's *Chandikāvya*, p. 71,

‘পাশাঙ্কুশ ঘণ্টা খেটক শরাসন ।

শোভে বাম করে পাঁচ পঞ্চপ্রহরন ॥

অসি চক্র শূল শক্তি কতমত শর ।

পাঁচ অস্ত্রে শোভিত দক্ষিণ পাঁচ কর ॥

(10) *Chakra*.<sup>1</sup>—A discus of which the following description is found in Śukranīti and the Nitiprakāśikā, IV, pp. 47-48. “The Chakra (discus) has the form of a circular discus with a quadrangular hole in its midst. Its colour is like that of indigo water and its circumference amounts to two spans or ten cubits according to Śukranīti. Five or seven motions are connected with the discus practice. It is most probably identical with the quoit still in use in some Sikh regiments and also among the troops of the native Indian Princes.” (See Gustav Oppert’s work on the subject.)

(11) *Śakti* or *Sel*.—A kind of spear or rod.<sup>2</sup> It was considered one of the most important weapons of war in the past. Its size was about two cubits in length ; one end of it was made of metal, representing the head of a lion with open mouth exhibiting the tongue, the chin resting on sharp claws. It had a long handle with small belts attached all over excepting the part reserved for holding. Its colour was black and it attained great velocity when thrown against the enemy. The course it took when thrown was curvilinear and not straight. Cf. the Australian Boomerang.

The goddess Durgā had the following weapons in her ten arms : she held in her five arms on the left the Pāś (noose), the Añkuś (elephant-goad), the Ghaṇṭā (bell), the Kheṭak (shield) and the Śarāsaṇ (the bow) and on the right she held the Asi (sword), the Chakra (disc), the Śul (spear), the Śakti (a kind of iron bar or spear) and Śar (arrows). See also Harirām’s Chaṇḍikāvya wherein weapons in the arms of the goddess are somewhat differently mentioned.

<sup>1</sup> See foot-note on Pāś in the above.

<sup>2</sup> See Ghanarām’s Dharmamaṅgal, p. 156,

‘সর শেল গুলি, আধালি পাধালি সমালে সমরে কালু’ :

(Kālu checked the arrows, Sel and the shots which were showered upon him.) In “The Elements of Hindu Iconography” by Gopinath Rao, Vol. I, Part I, we find Śakti in the form of a spear. It consists of a metallic piece either quadrangular or elliptical in shape with a socket into which a long wooden handle is fixed.” See Ratnamālā, and Gustav Oppert, p. 13, Nitiprakāśikā, IV, 32-35 and the Viśwakōṣa.

(12) *Tomar*.—The Tomāhawk, of which the following description is found in Gustav's work: "The Tomar (Tomāhawk) had a wooden body, a metal head, formed like a bunch of flowers. It is three cubits long, has a red colour and is not crooked. It is moved in three ways." A type of Tomāhawk was known as Sābal and another type as Jāthā.<sup>1</sup> These weapons were hurled against the enemy from a distance.

(13) *Mudgar*.—The hammer. The description of this weapon given by Gustav Oppert in his work (p. 20) is as follows: "The Mudgar, hammer, is small at the foot-end, has no face, and is three cubits long. Its colour resembles honey, its shoulder is broad and it weighs 8 loads. It has a good handle, is round, black-coloured, and is a hand in circumference. It is whirled around and fells things to the ground." Not only the soldiers but the war-elephants too wielded the weapon with their trunks, creating great havoc in the ranks of the enemy.<sup>2</sup> It was a common practice for the Indian war-elephant to use Mudgar during a battle. Cf. the hammer of the Scandinavian god Thor. A peculiar type of Mudgar was known as Mayūkhī. It was a kind of club and three and a half cubits long. It had

<sup>1</sup> See Kavikañkaṇ's *Chandrikāvya*, p. 94,

‘মাহুত হাথির পিঠে, শেল সাবল জাঠে, গগন পুরয়ে আড়ম্বরে’ :

(The Māhut took upon the back of his elephant Śel, Sābal and Jāthā.) See also Rameśwar's *Śivāyaṇa*, p. 65,

‘লোহার মুদগর, কুঠার, তোমর, শেল, শূল, খরধার ছুরি’ :

(Among the weapons there were the iron clubs, the battle-axes, the Tomāhawks, the Śels, the Sūls, and the sharp daggers.)

<sup>2</sup> See Kavikañkaṇ's *Chandrikāvya*, p. 94,

‘শত শত মস্তহাতী লৈয়া আইসে সেনাপতি শুণ্ডে বান্ধা লোহার মুদগর’ :

(Hundreds of war-elephants who had iron hammers in their trunks were brought in the battle-field by the commander of the army.)

small bells attached to it and was capable of five movements.<sup>1</sup>

(14) *Tabak*.—A musket of old type—a blunderbuss. A musketeer was generally known as the *Tabakī*. A special type of *Tabak* was known as the *Belak* (Carbine).<sup>2</sup> The blunderbusses and the carbines were much in use in Europe in the 18th century.

(15) *Aṅkuś*.<sup>3</sup>—The elephant-goat. “It was a weapon consisting of a sharp metal-hook attached to a wooden handle.”

War-chariots and war-elephants were amongst the more important paraphernalia of warfare.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ময়ূখী, প্রাচীন ভারতের যুদ্ধাস্ত্র-বিশেষ। ইহা পুরুষ-প্রমাণ দীর্ঘ যষ্টি। ইহার অগ্রে কিল্লিগী জাল। ইহা মুষ্টিযুক্ত। ইহার কার্য পাঁচ প্রকার—আঘাত, প্রতিঘাত, বিঘাত, পরিমোচন এবং অভিদ্রবণ।—বাস্তালা ভাষার অভিধান (জ্ঞানেন্দ্রমোহন দাস কর্তৃক সম্পাদিত)।

<sup>2</sup> See Kavikaṅkaṇ's *Chandrikāvya*, p. 94,

‘তবক বেলক বাণ’ :

(The muskets called *Tabak* and *Belak* and also the arrows.) See also p. 95 of the same work.

‘রায়বঁশ তবকী ফরিকাল ধামুকী’ :

(The soldiers wielding *Rālbānś*, *Tabaks* and the bows.) See also p. 76,

‘মুটকির তেজ যেন তবকের গুলি’ :

(The blow was as effective as a gun-shot.) *Farikāl* meant a detachment of troops. See also p. 96,

‘তবক বেলক কাছে কামান রূপাণ’ :

(There were the soldiers wielding the *Tabaks*, the *Belaks*, the cannon and the swords.)

<sup>3</sup> See ‘The Elements of Hindu Iconography’ by Gopinath Rao, Vol. I, Part I.

<sup>4</sup> See Kavikaṅkaṇ's *Chandrikāvya*, p. 94,

‘রথিতে জুড়িয়া হয় মহারথী যায় সারি সারি’ :

(The war-chariots drawn by horses and ridden by great warriors were marching in line.)

Horses employed in warfare were not only of indigenous breed (specially of Sind) but those imported from Persia, Arabia, Kāmod (Cambodia or Tibet?), Turkistan, etc.<sup>1</sup>

The elephants, horses, chariots and infantry were the four principal arms employed in warfare and were known as the Chaturaṅga (*lit.* four arms).<sup>2</sup> The artillery came to be introduced in later years. From a description of warfare in our old literature it may be surmised that the cavalry used to march first followed by war-chiefs marching ordinarily on trained elephants.<sup>3</sup> The description of the 'Rāibānsiā pāiks' or the infantry armed with *lāṭhis* fighting side by side with the artillery seems queer indeed. The pāiks used to cover their persons with earth to check perspiration before going to a battle and they wore *nūpura* on their feet.<sup>4</sup> Among the infantry we find mention of archers, wrestlers, shield-bearers and clubmen.<sup>5</sup>

The carrying of flags in a battle is mentioned in the Chaṇḍikāvya by Mukundarām.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the Jāgarana Chaṇḍikāvya by Mādhavāchāryya (edited by Chandrakānta Chakravartī), pp. 269-270,

‘এরাকি টাঙ্গন তাজী, শুরঙ্গ কামোদাবাজী, সিদ্ধদেশী তুরগ বিশাল’ :

(The big horses from Persia, Turkistan, Sind, Kāmod, etc.)

<sup>2</sup> See the Dharmamaṅgal poems by Rāmchandra Banerjee,

‘রাজার আদেশে চলে চতুরঙ্গ দল’ :

(By order of the king all the four arms were in readiness for a battle.)

<sup>3</sup> See the description of march of an army in the Dharmamaṅgal songs by Śītāiām Dās, C.U. MS. No. 2471, F. 6, 8.

<sup>4</sup> See the Chaṇḍikāvya by Mādhavāchāryya, also Chaṇḍikāvya by Kavikaṇḍan, p. 94.

<sup>5</sup> See the Dharmamaṅgal poems by Rāmchandra Banerjee and the Chaṇḍikāvya by various authors.

<sup>6</sup> See Kavikaṇḍan's Chaṇḍikāvya, p. 94,

‘সোণার টোপার শিরে, ঘন সিংহনাদপুরে, বাঁশে দোলে চামর নিশান’ :

(The king had a crown on his head and he marched amidst repeated loud cheers of the army while the flags and chowries hoisted on bamboos waved by the wind.)

Foreigners were employed in large numbers in the Bengal army. Among them the Telugus were numerous and their services were highly valued.<sup>1</sup>

The Rajputs also formed an important element in the Bengal army.<sup>2</sup>

There was a time when people belonging to different castes used to be employed in warfare, Brāhmaṇs not excepted. We find Brāhmaṇ troops exhibiting their sacred threads in mortal fear and reciting the *sandhyā mantras* as a sign of humiliation to save themselves from assault.<sup>3</sup>

The Domas though now occupying a degraded position in society were once held in high esteem. They were brave soldiers and one Kaloo Dom, as is found in the Dharma songs was even raised to the status of a general as a reward for his bravery. In those days the women also were good

<sup>1</sup> See the *Manasāmaṅgal* poems by Saṁthibar,

‘তেলঙ্গার ঠাট লড়ে বত্রিশ হাজার’ :

(Thirty-two thousand Telugu soldiers began the march.)

<sup>2</sup> See Rāmchandra Banerjee’s *Dharmamaṅgal* poems,

‘রাজপুত চৌহান সিপাই সাজা ঢালা’ :

(There were the Chauhan Rajput soldiers, armed cap-a-pie with armours.) The word Telugu is perhaps connected with the word *Teliṅganā* which was once a flourishing Hindu State in the Deccan with its capital at Warangal, now situated in the Nizam’s territories.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Chandikāvya* by Mādhavāchāryya, in which we find that among the Bengali troops, cowed down by formidable opponents, were men of various castes, such as the Brāhmaṇs, the Yogis, the blacksmiths and others. Thus :—

‘পলাইল যোগী পাইক মনে ভয় পায়া ।

সমরে রহিল কাটামুণ্ড শিরে দিয়া ॥

কর্মকার পাইক বলে করিয়া বিনয় ।

বীর গুরু বধিতে তোমার ধর্ম নয় ॥

নট পাইক বলে বাপু আমি পাইক নহি ।

বেগার ধরি আনিছে পরের ভার বহি ॥



fighters as we learn from the glorious description of Lakhā (a wife of Kaloo Dom), Kāneḍā and Kalingā (wives of Lāusen).

Twelve sub-lords<sup>1</sup> or vassals used to accompany a king to a battle-field. (*Cf.* Dodanapolis of ancient Greece. This custom also reminds one of the feudal system of Europe in the Middle Ages and the 'Sāmanta' system of Rajputana which is still in vogue.)

The warriors were generally armed to the teeth and protected with armour. (*Cf.* the knight's accoutrement of Europe in the Middle Ages and the armours of the Homeric warriors and the warriors of ancient Greece and Rome.)

পলায় বিশ্বাস পাইক ভয় ত্রাস পায়া ।  
 আকুল হইয়া কান্দে মুখে হাত দিয়া ॥  
 যতেক ব্রাহ্মণ পাইক পৈতা ধরি করে ।  
 দস্তে ভূণ ধরি তারা সন্ধ্যা মন্ত্র পড়ে ॥  
 যত যত যোগী পাইক দণ্ড ধরি করে ।  
 রক্ষ রক্ষ বলি তারা বিনয়ত করে ॥'

—মাধবাচার্য্যের চণ্ডীকাব্য (পৃ: ৮২) ।

<sup>1</sup> See the Dharma songs by Rāmchandra Banerjee,

'বার ভূঞা চলে ঘোড়া করিয়া তাজনী,  
 আচ্ছাদিত ধূলায় গগনে দিনমণি ;'

(Twelve vassals followed their lord on horseback and the dust raised by the hoofs of the horses concealed the sun from view.)



# CHAPTER VIII

## WAR-MUSIC



- |                |                                |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Rudra Vin   | 2. Dholak                      |
| 3. Jaga-Jhumpa | 5. Dambaru (small kettle-drum) |
| 6. Nākāḍā      | 8. Bhoraṅg                     |
| 4. Khañjari    |                                |
| 7. Kartāl      |                                |

## CHAPTER VIII

### WAR-MUSIC

Instrumental music always accompanied an army in former days as it does now all over the world. The two lists of musical instruments, given in the Dharmamaṅgal songs by Rāmchandra Banerjee and the Chaṇḍīkāvya by Kavikaṇkaṇ Mukundarām are more complete than other works on the subject.<sup>1</sup> A few musical instruments which

<sup>1</sup> See the Dharmamaṅgal poems by Rāmchandra Banerjee, Typ. Sel., Vol. I, p. 412 :

‘রায়বীণা গন্ধবীণা জম্বুরা ক্রলান ।  
ক্ষমরি মোহরি<sup>1</sup> কাড়া ফুকারে কাহান ॥  
দগড় দগড়ী বেণু রুদ্রবীণা বাঁশী ।  
কাংশু করতাল ঘণ্টা ঘোর শব্দ কাসী ॥  
সিন্ধু আনবরোল ভেরী রণভেরী কালী ।  
জয় ঢাক বীর ঢাক কর্ণে লাগে তালি ॥  
ধূসরি মোহরি ঢোল খঞ্জরি খমক ।  
জগম্প বাগুবাজে সঘনে গমক ॥  
রণশিঙ্গা ভোরঙ্গ বাজয়ে ভেঙ ভেঙ ।  
শৌকসিন্ধুর উপরে দামামা ধাঙ ধাঙ ॥’

(The military music consisted of the following instruments : Rāyvinā, Gandhavīṇā, Jamburā, Kralān, Kshamari, Mohari, Kāḍā, Kāhān, Dagaḍ, Dagaḍi, Beṇu, Rudra-vīṇā, Bānsī, Karatāl, Ghaṇṭā, Kānsi, Sindhu, Ānabarol, Raṇabherī, Kālī, Jayḍhāk, Bīrḍhāk, Dhūsari (Mohari?), Ḍhol, Khaṇjari, Khamak, Jagajhampa, Raṇasīṅgā Bhorāṅ and Dāmāmā.

<sup>1</sup> মোহরি ( মধুরি ) সধারণ কথায় তুবড়ি ( সাপুড়ের তুবড়ি ) ।

See Kavikaṇkaṇ's Chaṇḍīkāvya, p. 264 :

‘রায়বীণা গন্ধবীণা বাজে রুদ্রবীণা ।  
দগড় দগড়ী বায় শত শত জনা ॥

seem to have been used in former days but are now made use of mostly on festive occasions are noticed here.

(1) *Rudravīṇā*.—A kind of lyre. The following description about 'Vīṇā' occurs in 'A History of Music' (p. 26) by Stanford and Forsyth: "Vīṇā was originally made of a hollow wooden tube, supported on two empty gourds. At one end were the pegs (generally seven) and at the other a raised 'claw.' The wires ran from this claw or tailed piece to the pegs. But between these wires and the tube itself a number of little brass bridges were interposed. These varied from 19 to 23 or even more. The wires touched only the bridges nearest the pegs and therefore this bridge acted as a sort of 'nut.' The remaining bridges were used like the frets of guitar or mandoline. In other words, the players' fingers depressed the wires on to the bridges at pleasure. The nearer the finger approached the claw the shorter became the vibrating length of the wire and consequently the higher the pitch of the note produced. A metal plectrum was used for plucking the strings." *Rudravīṇā* was made of wood partly covered with leather. It had six strings, which were not metallic ones but were made of hair. A piece of fish-scale was required for plucking the strings. *Rudravīṇā* and two other allied instruments, *Rāyvinā* and *Gandhavīṇā* may be classed with the species known as harp.

হাথীর গলাতে ঘণ্টা বাজে ঠনঠনী ।  
 কাংশু করতাল বাজ করতাল শুনি ॥  
 জয়ঢাক বীরঢাক রাক্ষসী বাজনা ।  
 প্রলয় সমরে যেন পড়য়ে বনবননা ॥  
 হাতে দামা কাঁখে ঢাল ঢাল নিশান ।  
 দামা দরমসা বাজে বাজে সিন্ধুমান ॥'

The musical instruments, mentioned above were : *Rāyvinā*, *Gandhavīṇā*, *Rudravīṇā*, *Dagaḍ*, *Dagaḍi*, *Ghaṇṭā*, *Karatāl*, *Jayḍhāk*, *Bīrḍhāk*, *Dāmāmā*, *Ḍhol*, *Daramasā* and *Sindhuān*.

(2) *Dāmāmā*.—A kettle-drum. It was played with a pair of short sticks like *Tikārā*, *Nāgārā* or *Paṭaha* and *Dagaḍ*—all of which were almost similar instruments of music. A drum of a considerably large size was known as *Jayḍhāk*. A peculiar kind of kettle-drum was known as *Jagajhampa* which was suspended with a cord from the neck of the man who played on it with a pair of cane-sticks. Feathers of birds were used to decorate a *Jagajhampa*. It had always been a favourite instrument of music with the Mahomedans and it is still used by them specially on religious occasions (*cf.* the Arabic *Tambourines*). *Bheri*, another kind of kettle-drum, was once a favourite military musical instrument in our country. Our literature gives an abundant reference to this instrument. Akin to *Bheri* there was also another type known as *Dunduvi*. Both *Bheri* and *Dunduvi* were used in ancient times and are now almost unknown in our country. A special type of drum having only one side to play on was known as *Kāḍā*. It too used to be suspended from the neck of a player with a cord who struck it with both his hands. Strokes were given by the right hand with the help of a cane-stick and by the left with the palm.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* The kettle-drums as used in Egypt and Arabia. "Most of their (*Arabian*) instruments came from the Egyptians..... These primitive kettle-drums are still played in Egypt and Arabia. During the Crusades, they found their way into Europe and were adopted as the earliest form of small kettle-drum. In England their Arabic name *Naqqareh* became naturalised into the current fourteenth century word *Nakers*..... They were afterwards superseded by the big Hungarian cavalry-drums" (*Jayḍhāk* ?)—'A History of Music' by Stanford and Forsyth, p. 23. See *Kavikaṅkaṇ's Chandraḍikāvyā*, p. 94,

‘সাজ সাজ পড়ে ডাক, দামামা দগড় ঢাক’ :

(There was the order to get ready for the battle, when *Dāmāmā*, *Dagaḍ* and *Ḍhāk* were beaten for the purpose.) See also *Ghanarām's Dharmamaṅgal*, p. 20,

‘ঘনরোল দামামা দগড় পড়ে ঘা’ :

(The musical instruments *Dāmāmā* and *Dagaḍ* when beaten gave out a deep note.) See *Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām's Chandraḍikāvyā*, p. 94,

(3) *Dhol*.—A kind of drum. *Dhol* and *Dholak* are both of the same species of musical instruments, the former being of a larger size than the latter. *Dhol* is used to be hung on the neck of a person by a cord who beats it with his right hand on one side and with a stick on the other. The stick used for the purpose was generally made of a small piece of bamboo with a curved head.<sup>1</sup> A kind of *Dhol*, named *Ḍiḍima*, which was used in ancient time, is now out of use. This instrument of music was also in use in many other parts of the world such as Assyria, Babylonia, China and various other countries outside India.<sup>2</sup>

‘জগম্প বাজে কাড়া’ :

(There was the flourish of music of Jagajhampa and Kādā.) See p. 95 of the same work.

‘বাণের নাহি সীমা, বাজে ছন্দুভি দামামা’ :

(There was great display of music specially of Dundubhi and Dāmāmā.) See the Dharma songs by Sitārām Dās, C. U. MS. No. 2471, F. 6,

‘শিক্ষা কাড়া ঢোল, হ’ল গণ্ডগোল, সাজিল রাজার শালা’ :

(There was great noise of musical instruments such as Singā, Kādā and *Dhol*, the occasion being the preparation of the king’s brother-in-law for a battle.)

<sup>1</sup> See Kavikaṇṭap’s Chaṇḍikāvya, p. 94,

‘আশিগণ্ডা বাজে ঢোল, তের কাহন সাজে ক্রোলা’ :

(There were 320 musicians, beating *dhols*, when the Kol soldiers numbering 208 got themselves in readiness for a battle.) See Kavikaṇṭap, p. 95,

‘ডিণ্ডিম বাজয়ে কাড়া’ :

(The sound of *Ḍiḍima* and Kādā.) See Ghanarām’s Dhārmamaṅgal, p. 156,

‘জোড়া কাড়া খঞ্জর’ :

(A pair of Kādā and Khañjar, Khañjarī.)

N.B.—Khañjanī or Khañjarī is a kind of small drum combined with cymbals while Khañjar means a shot or a dagger.

<sup>2</sup> “In the Hindu legends the drum is the characteristic instrument, associated with all the acts of life. And it remains so to-day ... Its two chief types are, and probably always were, the long-drum beaten at both ends either with the

(4) *Bhoraṅg*.—A kind of pipe. It resembled a telescope in appearance, and consisted of double tubes, one inner and the other outer. Clever manipulation of the instrument produced notes of different pitches. This is now practically out of use. (*Cf.* the double pipes of the Egyptian musical instrument.) Another type of wind instrument was known as *Rapaśiṅgā*—a kind of trumpet—which was chiefly made of bell-metal (*cf.* the metal-trumpet,—the *Salpinx*,—used in Greece). The *Rapaśiṅgā* (*lit.* battle-horn) was largely in use in ancient time, when the commanders used it in issuing direction to their troops in the battle-field. The instrument may have derived its name from horns from which it had originally been made. The Hebrews used ram's horn as their trumpet.<sup>1</sup> Another kind of pipe or flute was known as *Venu*. Among flutes of different types it was the longest.

hands or with drum-sticks, and the small pair of right and left hand drums, which had their origin in the skin-covered gourd."

"The Assyrians and Babylonians had also drums."

"The huge ceremonial drum which is placed in the Eastern Pagoda of the Hall (of China) to balance the principal bell in the western, three other smaller drums are used in the ritual music. One is a large drum (*Yung-ku*) with a single head of parchment about three feet in diameter. It is beaten three times after each verse of the hymn and each beat is answered by two beats of a slightly smaller double-headed drum known as *Tsu-ku*. A smaller drum still (*Po-fu*), whose use is forbidden except for religious purposes, answers the two beats of the middle-sized drum with three strokes—one right-handed, one left-handed, and one double-handed." See 'A History of Music' by Stanford and Forayth (Macmillan and Co.), pp. 26, 19, and 35.

<sup>1</sup> See *Kavikaṭkaṇ's* *Chapṛīkāvyā*, p. 95,

‘বাতের নাহি সীমা হৃন্দুভি বাজে দামামা, ঘন শিঙ্গা বাজে পড়া’ :

(There was no dearth of musical instruments. The *Dunduvi*, *Dāmāmā* and *Siṅgā* were all played simultaneously). See also *Ghanarām's* *Dharmamaṅgal*, p. 156,

‘ভাঙ ভাঙ রণশিঙ্গা বাজে’ :

(The deep note of *Rapaśiṅgā* was heard.) See also the *Dharmamaṅgal* poems by *Rāmnārāyaṇ*, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 2



On one side there was only one opening and on the other were six. (*Cf.* The Greek Aulos which was a wooden pipe, originally containing three or four finger holes.)<sup>1</sup> The Assyrians and Babylonians used clay flutes with two finger-holes. Yet another kind of flute was known as Bānśī (*lit.* a pipe made of bamboo). It was originally made with a particular species of bamboo but it is now made of wood, metal and ivory. The length of a Bānśī varied from eight 'Aṅgulis' (about four inches) to even more than a cubit. Its upper end was generally kept closed and the lower end open. It had one main opening to blow it with mouth and six other openings for the fingers to play on.<sup>2</sup> Popular tradition associates it with the name of Śrīkṛṣṇa,—the particular one used by him, according to mythology, was generally known as Mūralī.

(5) *Kāsi*.—A gong,—an instrument made of bell-metal and resembles a plate with raised border. Two openings are made on two sides of it to be held by a piece of chord with the left hand by the person who strikes it with his right hand by a stick. Another instrument closely

"The twisted ram's horn trumpet was peculiar to the Hebrews. Made from the natural horn, and therefore roughly conical in form, it was consecrated to the service of the temple and found only in the hands of the priestly Levites. Seven of these instrument blown under Joshua's directions by seven priests after they had compassed the city seven times on, the seventh day, in combination with the shouting of the Israelites, destroyed the wall of Jericho. These instruments were also made from the horns of the koodooos." See 'A History of Music' by Stanford and Forsyth, pp. 21-22.

<sup>1</sup> See Viśwakopā and the 'History of Music' by Stanford and Forsyth, pp. 40-41 and 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* the Chinese flute 'Hsiao' with the Veṇu and Bānśī. "The flute (Hsiao), which has now been used in the ritual music for over 600 years, is a bamboo instrument, scientifically much like our (English) keyless flute. It measures 1 $\frac{1}{10}$  feet long and is provided with an embouchure-hole, five finger-holes and one thumb-hole. Six of these flutes take part in the sacred music. Their use for secular purposes is officially forbidden." See 'A History of Music' by Stanford and Forsyth, p. 35.

resembling a Kāsi was known as Jhāñjar which was formerly used in battles to give signals from a distance. It is now solely used in the religious ceremonies of the Hindus.

(6) *Karatāl or a cymbal*.—Circular in shape, it is slightly high in the middle, with an opening in the centre. Through this hole a cord is passed to be held on the raised side by the musician. Two pieces of this round instrument are required to be struck against each other. Karatāl is now used mainly in conjunction with Khol, a kind of drum, which is a favourite instrument of music with the Vaiṣṇava Hindus. A variety of Karatāl which is smaller in size and somewhat different in shape is called Mandirā.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Among Sanskrit works on Indian music the following books may be read with profit :—

- (1) Bharata (Nāṭya Śāstra).
- (2) Saṅgīta-Dāmodara
- (3) Saṅgīta-Pārijāta
- (4) Ratna-mālā
- (5) Nāradaśāstra-saṃhitā
- (6) Hari-Nāyaka
- (7) Medinī-Gīta
- (8) Saṅgīta-Darpaṇa
- (9) Saṅgīta-śāstra
- (10) Saṅgīta-Ratnākara (by Śārṅga Deva)

N.B.—Bhakti-ratnākara (a Bengali work) by Narahari Chakrabartī contains a fine exposition of Sanskrit (and so of Bengali) music, in its fifth canto. The names of the above Saṅgīta works except Saṅgīta-Ratnākara may be found in Bhakti-ratnākara (Canto V).

Among English works on the subject may be mentioned "Indian Music" by Popley, "Indian Music" by Strangways, "Music of the Deccan" by Captain Day, and "A History of Music" by Stanford and Forsyth.

## CHAPTER IX

### HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Bengal was under Mahomedan rule for nearly eight centuries. During this period their relationship with the Hindus was on the whole friendly. The Hindus and the Mahomedans could live peacefully if the autocrats would have allowed it, as the peace of the country to a great extent depended on the latter. A good autocrat ruled to the entire satisfaction of all, while a bad ruler oppressed both the communities. So whatever differences might have existed they were due to the tyrannical rule of individual autocrats—Hindus certainly not excepted—causing an ever-widening breach between the communities.

Examples are not far to seek. In the days of Hindu rule, Rājā Māṇikchandra's subjects, as we learn from the Maināmātī songs, were so opulent that "persons who somehow managed to live, had horses waiting at their doors."<sup>1</sup> "Even the maid-servants disliked ordinary cloths."<sup>2</sup> "Nobody used the path which was not his own and nobody used the water from the tank not belonging to himself."<sup>3</sup> Such prosperity was not enjoyed by people for a long time in the past. "An East-Bengal man with a flowing beard came to rule the land under Rājā Māṇikchandra. This man imposed exorbitant taxes on his subjects. From a Buḍi and a half he increased the taxes to fifteen

<sup>1</sup> 'একতন যেকতন কৈরে যে খাইছে তার দুয়ারত ঘোড়া'।

<sup>2</sup> 'ঘিনে বান্দী নাহি পিন্দে পাটের পাছর'।

<sup>3</sup> 'কারো মাড়াল দিয়া কেহ নাহি যায়।

কারো পুষ্করিণীর জল কেহ নাহি খায়॥'

gaṇḍās. People sold everything—even the ploughs, plough-shares, yokes, and all other requisites of cultivation. They went so far as to sell their children from the bosom of their mothers. The widows and the poor suffered terribly. As a result, the Taluks were turned into jungles.”<sup>1</sup>

In spite of all poetic exaggerations the story might represent the actual condition of the people when ruled by a whimsical autocrat. The horrible description of the jail in the capital of the Rājā of Siṃghal in which the merchant Dhanapati was confined, as we learn from the *Chandīkāvyas*, probably represents the actual state of affairs of our country in by-gone days.

Kavikaṇkaṇ Mukundarām in depicting the character of Mahmud Sherif, a local officer, who represented the type of the most oppressive rulers, writes thus in his *Chandīkāvyas* (Baṅgabāsī edition) :—

“Unfortunately for the people, a Mahomedan Governor named Mahmud Sherif was entrusted with the administration of the Parganā. Under his rule the traders groaned. He made false measurements of land—a Kuḍā was measured at 15 cottas and rents were assessed on waste lands. The poor man’s prayer was not heeded. The moneylenders became exacting. The value of the rupee was reduced by two annas and a half. No purchasers were to be found

- <sup>1</sup> ‘ভাটি হইতে আইল বাঙ্গাল লম্বা লম্বা দাড়ি ।  
সেই বাঙ্গাল আসিয়া মূলকৎ কৈল কড়ি ॥  
আছিল দেড়বুড়ি খাজনা, লইল পনর গড়া ।  
লাঙ্গল বেচায়, জোয়াল বেচায়, আরো বেচায় ফাল ।  
খাজনার তাপতে বেচায় দুধের ছাওয়ালা ॥  
রাড়ী কাঙ্গাল হুঃখীর বড় হুঃখ হৈল !  
খানে খানে তালুক সব ছন হৈয়া গেল ॥’

মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান—বঙ্গসাহিত্য-পরিচয়, ১ম ভাগ, পৃঃ ২৮-২৯ ।



Mahmud Sherif probably ruled under the Hindu Rājā Mān Simha, who was then the Governor of Bengal.

The autocrats used to carry away girls, noted for their beauty, by force and marry them against their wish. In Samser Gāzir Gān, a historical work (mid-eighteenth century), we find the following interesting story bearing on the subject :

“The Gāzi once went to a forest for hunting near Jaypur Mandiā, a village where lived one Manu Sarkār who had a very beautiful daughter whom her father gave in marriage to a Kulin Brahmin of Mireśwarī. Once she went to a neighbouring tank for a bath, accompanied by her girl friends, when she was noticed by the Gāzi who was at once charmed by her rare personal beauty. The Gāzi seized her from amongst her companions ‘just as a serpent catches a frog.’ He was, however, a sensible person and by way of persuading his own wife to accord her consent to his marrying the girl whom he had captured, said—‘Such intermarriages are not new in this country and they are now recognised everywhere.’ He did not stop here. According to his wife’s advice he tried to console the girl by paying a large sum of money to her father and getting her Hindu husband married again to another beautiful girl of the town of Bhulūā.”<sup>1</sup>

সহায় ত্রীমন্ত খাঁ,

চণ্ডীবাটী যার গাঁ,

যুক্তি কৈলা মুনিব পঁর সনে ।

দামুতা ছাড়িয়া যাই,

সঙ্গে রমানাথ ভাই,

পথে চণ্ডী দিলা দরশনে ॥ ’

—কবিকঙ্কণ মুকুন্দরায়ের চণ্ডীকাব্য, পৃঃ ৬ ।

<sup>1</sup> হিন্দুর নন্দিনী বিবাহ ।

একদিন গাজী গেল করিতে শীকার ।

জয়পুর মন্দিয়ার বনের মাঝার ॥

The carrying away of another Hindu girl by force by an oppressive Kāzi has been vividly described in the story of Maluā in the Mymensingh Ballads. The despot Jehangir Dewan, a great oppressor, treated the Hindus and the Mahomedans alike. He oppressed Maluā in a terrible manner, and the Kāzi was beheaded by his order without a hearing. If the chief was a despot, the rigour of his Government fell equally on the two sections of the community.

জয়পুরে ছিল এক মনু সরকার ।  
 কান্ধুলাম লঙ্কর হয় ফরজঙ্গ তাহার ॥  
 সেই মনু সরকারের সুন্দরী কুমারী ।  
 কুলীন দামাদে বিভা দিছিল মিরেশ্বরী ॥  
 পঞ্চসখী মিলি তারা পুকুরের ধারে ।  
 গিয়েছিল সেই দিন স্নান করিবারে ॥  
 নূতন বয়সী বামা জলে যেন উড়ে ।  
 দেখিয়া গাজীর চিত্ত ধরাইতে নারে ॥  
 ইসারা করিল গাজী লোক গেল দূরে ।  
 গাজী উত্তরিল সেই পুষ্করিণী পাড়ে ॥  
 গজ লোটাইয়া গাজী তুলি নিল ধনী ।  
 রাজপথে ভেক ধরি যেন নিল ফণী ॥  
 নিল নিল বলি ডাকে সেই সখীগণ ।  
 বাপে পুত্রে শুনি তারা হৈল অচেতন ॥  
 জাতি গেল জাতি গেল কান্দে সর্বজন  
 কি করিব কোথা যাব করয়ে ভাবন ॥  
 আসিতে শীকার কৈরে পথে দৈবগতি ।  
 পাইলাম রত্ন এক সুন্দরী যুবতি ॥  
 যদি কৃপা কর যোরে হয় মম কাজ ।  
 দেশাচার আছে নাহি এতে লাজ ॥  
 এ বলিয়া প্রিয়া হস্তে সমর্পিল বামা ।  
 মঞ্জুর করিল বিবি ছাড়ি নিজ তামা ॥

It should be clearly understood that not only did the Hindu girls but the Mahomedan girls also suffer at the hands of the autocratic rulers. The abduction of girls might have been felt more keenly by the Hindus because of the fact that such an occurrence always entailed excommunication and social degradation. These outcastes formed numerous subcastes such as Sherkhāni, Pirāli, Bhairabghatki, Harimajumdāri—all of which were originally pure Brahmins.<sup>1</sup>

The Hindu Rājās sometimes were notorious for their tyranny. Chānd Rāy, the Foujdār of Gaurdwār was, as we understand from the Vaiṣṇava literature, 'Physically a very strong man and had become the terror of the people. He killed men, looted their property, and seized their wives and daughters so that at the mere report of his approach, people of a town or a village fled with their families and treasures.'<sup>2</sup>

যে ইচ্ছা তোমার প্রভু সে ইচ্ছা আমার ।  
 মনে লয় যেই সেই কর আপনার ॥  
 কিন্তু হিন্দুস্তা ধনী তুমি মুসলমান ।  
 কলেমা পড়াই তারে আনাও ইমান ॥  
 তাহার পিতারে আনি রাজি কর গাজী ।  
 পূর্বস্বামী বশ কর আল্লা হবে রাজী ॥  
 এ বলি রাখিল কছা করিয়া যতন ।  
 হারামি করিতে গাজী না পারে যেমন ॥  
 সমসের গাজী মল্ল সরকারে আনি ।  
 প্রণামে নজর দিয়া খশুর হেন জানি ॥  
 মিরেশ্বরী হতে আনি পূর্ব দামাদেরে ।  
 বিবাহ করাই দিল ভুলুয়া নগরে ॥

—সমসের গাজীর গান, পৃঃ ৮২-৮৩ ।

<sup>1</sup> See N. Vasu's *Castes and Sects of Bengal*, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 201-18. See also the works of Harikavindra and Danujāri Miśra.

<sup>2</sup> See Dr. Sen's *Vaiṣṇava Literature*, p. 136.



Whims of autocratic rulers always kept the country under a constant alarm in those days. Thus in the *Dharmamaṅgal* poems, the cruel treatment of Māhudyā towards his nephew Lāusen, the capital sentence which that wicked minister contrived to inflict on Harihar Bāity for the fault of telling the truth—all go to prove that the Hindu and the Mahomedan autocrats had all a common mentality and the question of racial difference cannot be regarded as supplying any evidence for the purpose of judging their conduct. The legends of the *Dharmamaṅgal* poems indicate a state of society which though presented in mythical form is but a reflection of what actually happened in the country in those days.<sup>1</sup> We find in the 16th and 17th centuries Bīr Hāmavīra and Chānd Rāy committing atrocities on the Hindus in the most cruel and heartless manner.

In the *Chaitanya Maṅgal* by Jayānanda is to be found a story about Husen Shah's oppressions of the Hindus though that monarch is known in history as a great patron of vernacular literature.

It is quite natural that these autocrats would often treat people not belonging to their own race with a greater severity. We have heard the story which describes the most inhuman cruelty with which Ballāl Sen punished a Mahomedan who had killed a cow, at a place many hundred miles away from his capital. There are besides examples of tyranny of the Mahomedan Kāzis of which the Hindus were the victims and all this will show that the racial question played at least some part in these matters. The history of Europe of the contemporary period presents a parallel picture of one party persecuting the other among the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. The poets of *Manasāmaṅgal*, specially Bijay Gupta and Bañśīdās,

<sup>1</sup> See the *Dharmamaṅgal* poems by Ghanarām, Mupik Gāṅguli and others.

have left some stories for us which inspite of the poetic exaggerations they contain may have some bearing on the actual condition of the country.

We give the following story, taken from Bijay Gupta's *Manasāmaṅgal* (Peary Saṅkar Gupta's ed.) :—

“ *The Story of Hāsān and Husen.* ”

In the south, near the village of Husenhāti, there lived two Mahomedan brothers, named Hāsān and Husen. They were both of notorious character, great bullies and sworn enemies of the Hindus. There was another rogue also, named Dulā Hāldār, a brother-in-law of Husen, who always preceded the latter when he went out ; Dulā surpassed Husen in his oppressions which were mainly directed to the Hindus who used to flee away if they happened to meet him. Dulā used to arrest the Hindus and take them to his brother-in-law, the Kāzi, to be tried for offences such as the carrying of a Tulasī leaf on their head (a practice still prevalent amongst the Vaiṣṇavas). Punishment would now follow as a matter of course. The unfortunate accused used to be assaulted, in accordance with the Kāzi's orders, by Dulā himself. They were led to a spot under the shade of a tree. Blows and slaps fell on them as ‘hails in a storm.’ Dulā's Pāiks were particularly hostile to the Brahmins and used, in great delight and enthusiasm, to draw them by their neck, tear off their sacred thread and spit into their mouth. Brahmins of a comparatively milder temperament could not use cow-dung for purificatory purposes in their house, any custom savouring of Hinduism being sufficient to invite punishment.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> হাসেন হোসেনের পালা ।

দক্ষিণে হোসেনহাটি গ্রামের নিকট ।

তথায় যখন বৈসে দুই বেটা শঠ ॥

Baṇśīdās furnishes some sidelight in the matter as will appear from the following :

“ When the Kāzi learnt that some Hindu milkmen had been engaged in worshipping the goddess Manasā Devī at a certain place, he called out his men to accompany him to the scene. Within a moment a large number of Khojās (eunuchs) and Mahomedans came out and followed him, not one remaining in the town. All of them now arrived at the place where the ceremony was being performed.

The Kāzi's presence filled the hearts of the worshippers with terror and they took to their heels and fled in all directions. But some of them were caught hold of by the Kāzi's followers and beaten mercilessly. The sacred jar—an emblem of the deity—was broken to pieces and

হাসেন হসেন তারা দুই ভায়ের নাম ।  
 দুইজনে করে তারা বিপরীত কাম ॥  
 কাজিয়ানী করে তারা জানে বিপরীত ।  
 তাদের সমুখে নাই হিন্দুয়ানী রীত ॥  
 যাহার মাথায় দেখে তুলসীর পাত ।  
 হাতে গলে বান্ধি নেয় কাজির সাক্ষাৎ ॥  
 বৃক্ষতলে খুইয়া মারে বজ্রকিল ।  
 পাথরের প্রমাণ যেন ঝড়ে পড়ে শিল ॥  
 পরের মারিতে কিবা পরের লাগে ব্যথা ।  
 চোপড় চাপড় মারে দেয় ঘাড়কাতা ॥  
 এক বেটা হালদার তার নাম ছলা ।  
 বড় অহঙ্কার করে হোসেনের শালা ॥  
 সর্বক্ষণ হোসেনের আগে আগে আসে ।  
 তাহার ভয়ে হিন্দুসব পলায় তরাসে ॥  
 যে যে ব্রাহ্মণের পৈতা দেখে তারা কান্ধে ।  
 পেয়াদা বেটা লাগ পাইলে তার গলায় বান্ধে ॥

the requisites of the ceremony were scattered over and trampled under foot. This done the iconoclasts said their prayer at that very place and caused the Hindus—specially the Brahmins who came there as mere onlookers—to have them circumcised with a view to break their caste. To crown all they desecrated the place by killing cows before they left it.”<sup>1</sup>

- ব্রাহ্মণ পাইলে লাগ পরম কৌতুকে ।  
তার পৈতা ছিড়ি ফেলে থুথু দেয় মুখে ॥  
ব্রাহ্মণ সূজন তথায় বসে অতিশয় ।  
গৃহঘর গোময় না দেয় দুর্জনের ভয় ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

—বিজয়গুপ্তের মনসামঙ্গল ।

- 1 সাজ সাজ বলিয়া হাসন পাড়ে ডাক ।  
একডাকে বাহিরিল খোজা তিন লাখ ॥

\* \* \* \*

ঘন ঘন সারাকাটি পড়িল নগরে ।  
একজন মুসলমান না রৈল সহরে ॥  
অসিয়া মিলিল সবে পদ্মপূজা স্থান ।  
ই দেখিয়া হিন্দুমানের উড়িল পরাণ ॥  
কেহ পলাইয়া গেল কেহ দিল লড় ।  
কেহকে মারিল বাড়ি করে ধড় ফড় ॥  
পূজা ভাঙ্গি ঘটবারি ভাঙ্গিয়া ফেলায় ।  
যতেক মঙ্গল দ্রব্য পাড়ে তুই পায় ॥  
ব্রাহ্মণের জাতিনাশ করিবার ছলে ।  
কর্ণেত কলিমা পড়ে যবন সকলে ॥  
আসিছিল যতলোক দেখিবারে ব্রত ।  
জুলুম করিয়া সবে করিল স্তম্ভত ॥  
গোহত্যা করিল তথা করিয়া জ্বর ।  
তদন্তরে সবগুলো চলি গেল ঘর ॥

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল ।

The people specially the Hindus though generally of a mild temperament were sometimes goaded to desperation by the oppressive conduct of the Mahomedan rulers (who were not certainly many) and were forced to take retaliatory measures. Thus we find the following in the Manasāmaṅgal poems by Bañśīdās :

“After having desecrated the place of worship of the goddess Manasā Devī by breaking the sacred jar when the Mahomedans headed by the Kāzi were discussing the means of putting the whole village (peopled by the Hindus) to flame, the devotees, all belonging to the Goālā (milkmen) caste, could restrain themselves no longer. They attacked the Mahomedans furiously and the latter found themselves powerless with no other course left open to them than to take to their heels. But many could not escape. Minā Kāzi was one of them. He was surrounded by the milkmen and bound hand and foot. He was then beaten and put to abject humiliation. A goat's skin was tied round his neck and all jeered at the predicament in which he was thus placed. The vindictive measures went further still. They burnt the Korān and other sacred scriptures of the Mahomedans. They tore off his beard and when he was let off he was barely alive. The milkmen then had their bath, worshipped the goddess, after which they left the place.’

এই সব যুক্তি তারা করই বসিয়া ।  
 হেনকালে গোপ সব আইল সাজিয়া ।  
 ধর ধর মার মার বলে গোপগণে ।  
 মিঞা সব পলাইল ভয় পায়্যা মনে ॥  
 বনে ঝোপে গেল তারা লড়ালড়ি পাড়ি ।  
 মিনা কাজি পলাইতে ধরিলেক বেড়ি ॥

The Mahomedan rulers were sometimes noted for governing the country in the most beneficent manner. The names of the Sultans Ghyāsuddin, Nasirā Shah and Husen Shah, as also the names of the Governors Parāgal Khan and Chbuti Khan are instances of these types of rulers. The Maithili poet Vidyāpati spoke of Nasirā Shah in the following terms :

“ Nasirā Shah who knows love matters quite well, cupid pierced with his dart. The poet Vidyāpati says, ‘ Long live the Emperor of the five Gaudas.’ ”<sup>1</sup> The poet elsewhere spoke of his lord Sultan Ghyāsuddin.<sup>2</sup>

Nasirā Shah ruled Bengal for forty years till 1325 A.D. It is said that it was Nasirā Shah who first initiated the translation of the Mahābhārata in Bengali from Sanskrit.

ধরিয়া বাঙ্কিল তারে ছান্দাদড়ি দিয়া ।  
মুষ্টি প্রহার করে বুকতে বসিয়া ॥  
কাটা ছাগলের চর্ম গলে দিয়া মালা ।  
হাততালী দিয়া তারে মারে ঘন ঠেলা ॥  
কিতাব কোরাণ কত পুড়িল সকল ।  
দাঁড়ি উপাড়িয়া প্রাণে রাখিল কেবল ॥  
তার পরে ছাড়ি দিল দুর্বল দেখিয়া ।  
জ্ঞান করি পদ্মা পূজে হরষিত হৈয়া ॥

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল ।

‘ সো নসিরা সাহ জানে ।  
যাক হাগিল মদন বাণে ॥  
চিরঞ্জিব রহ পঞ্চ গৌড়েখর,  
কবি বিজ্ঞাপতি ভাণে ’

—বিজ্ঞাপতি, পৃ: ২৮ (N. Gupta's Ed.).

২ প্রভু গিয়াসুদ্দিন সুলতান ।’

—বিজ্ঞাপতি ।

It was, however, the age of Husen Shah (15th century), which might be compared to that of Queen Elizabeth of England (16th century) in respect of the advancement of vernacular literature under State patronage. Like Elizabeth who patronised Spenser, Shakespeare and many other poets and writers, Husen Shah befriended the vernacular poets of Bengal, such as Mālādhār Basu, Bijay Gupta, Jaśorāj Khan and a host of others.

It was at the initiation of Husen Shah that Mālādhār Basu translated the Bhāgabata into Bengali in 1480 and received from his kind master the title of Guṇarāj Khan.<sup>1</sup> Bijay Gupta, the celebrated poet of the goddess Padmā referred to Husen Shah as being the best of all monarchs.<sup>2</sup> Jaśorāj Khan said, 'His Majesty Husen Shah who is the ornament of the world knows the emotion well.'<sup>3</sup>

The noble spirit of the master was a source of inspiration to his courtiers and thus Parāgal Khan who was a commander and Governor under him, patronised Kavīndra Parameśwar, the celebrated poet of the day and advised him to transtate the Sanskrit Mahābhārata into Bengali, a portion of which (up to the Strēe Parva) thus was rendered into our vernacular. Parāgal was the Governor of Chittagong

<sup>1</sup> 'নিগুণ অধম মুক্তি নাহি কোন গ্রাম ।

গৌড়েশ্বর দিল নাম গুণরাজ খান ॥'

—ভূমিকা, মালধর বসুর ভাগবতের অনুবাদ ।

(I have no qualities and have no village in my possession. My name 'Guṇarāj Khan' (*lit.* possessor of all virtues) has been given to me by the Lord of Gauḍ.  
—Preface to the Bengali translation of the Bhāgabata by Mālādhār Basu.)

<sup>2</sup> 'সুলতান হসেন সাহা নৃপতিতিলক ।'

—বিজয়গুপ্তের মনসামঙ্গল, পৃ: ৮ ।

<sup>3</sup> 'শ্রীযুত হসন জগত ভূষণ, সো এরস জান ।

পঞ্চ গৌড়েশ্বর ভোগপুরন্দর ভনে যশরাজ খান ।

—রসমঞ্জরী, পৃ: ৮ ।

where he ruled semi-independently. Parāgal's worthy son Chhuti Khan followed in the wake of his father and appointed one Śrīkaraṇ Nandi to continue the work of translation and bring it down to the Aśwamedh Parva. Kavīndra eulogised Husen Shah in glowing terms in his work.

Śrīkaraṇ Nandi was also similarly full of panegyrics for these Mahomedan rulers as we find in the opening chapter of his work.

Not only in social matters but also in religion, the communities joined hands and as a result a common god evolved known as Satya Pīr, worshipped both by the Hindus and the Mahomedans. The very name of this god indicates his connection with both the communities, the word itself being a combination of Sanskrit and Arabic.

The abjuration of Islamism by the Mahomedans and their adoption of Vaiṣṇavism are well known in the Vaiṣṇava history. The conversion of the Mahomedan saint, who afterwards became known as Haridās Sādhu, is known to all. The conversion of one *Bijuli Khan* and some other Pāṭhāns as found in *Chaitanya Charitāmṛta*, *Madhyakhaṇḍa*,<sup>1</sup> is also interesting indeed.

At another place of the same work we find the following interesting incident in which Husen Shah, the Emperor of Gauḍ, spoke of Chaitanya Dev as God personified. He said :<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhyakhaṇḍa, pp. 736-43.

<sup>2</sup> গোড়েশ্বর যবনরাজ্য প্রভাব শুনিঞ।  
কহিতে লাগিলা কিছু বিস্তৃত হইয়া ॥  
বিনা দানে এত লোক যার পাছে ধায়।  
সেই ত গোঁসাক্রি ইহা জানিহ নিশ্চয় ॥



“As people are flocking to see him in such large numbers, though they do not receive anything from him, shows that the man thus followed must be a saint. I command the Kāzis and Mussalmāns in general not to molest him. Let him say anything that he desires. The Sultan next enquired of Keśab Chhatri about Chaitanya Dev, who was a follower of the latter and who apprehended evil designs of the Sultan and thus replied with a view to shielding the Great Saint: ‘Your Majesty should consider Chaitanya Deva as a common Sannyāsī and a beggar. Very few people go to him. Your co-religionists magnify the truth. It is no use taking any notice of this poor fellow.’ Thus consoling the Sultan, Keśab secretly despatched a

কাজি যবন কেহ ঞ্জিহার না কর হিংসন ।  
 আপন ইচ্ছায় বলুন যাহা ইহঁার মন ॥  
 কেশব ছত্রীরে রাজা বার্তা যে পুছিল ।  
 প্রভুর মহিমা ছত্রী উড়াইয়া দিল ॥  
 ভিক্ষারী সন্ন্যাসী করে তীর্থ পর্য্যটন ।  
 তারে দেখিবারে আইসে দুইচার জন ॥  
 যবনে তোমার ঠাই করয়ে লাগনি ।  
 তাঁর হিংসায় লাভ নাহি হয় মাত্র হানি ॥  
 রাজারে প্রবোধি ছত্রী ব্রাহ্মণ পাঠাইয়া ।  
 বলিবার তরে প্রভুরে পাঠাইল কহিয়া ॥  
 দবীর খাসেরে রাজা পুছিল নিভৃত্তে ।  
 গোসাঞির মহিমা তেহঁে লাগিলা কহিতে ॥  
 যে তোমাতে রাজ্য দিল তোমাতে গোসাঞী ।  
 তোমার ভাগ্যে তোমার দেশে জন্মিল আসিঞা ॥  
 তোমার মঙ্গল বাঞ্ছে বাক্য সিদ্ধ হয় ।  
 ইহার আশীর্ব্বাদে তোমার সর্ব্বত্রতে জয় ॥  
 মোরে কেনে পুছ তুমি পুছ আপন মন  
 তুমি নবাধিপ হও, বিষ্ণু অংশ সম ॥

Brahmin to Chaitanya to communicate what conversation had taken place between him and the Sultan. The Sultan afterwards conferred with Dabir Khas, his minister, about the Lord, all alone. The minister spoke in glowing terms about the greatness of the Lord. He said that it was Chaitanya Deva himself who has endowed you with your kingdom. It was due to your luck that such a great saint had been born in your kingdom. The Lord is your well-wisher and surely the Sultan would attain all-round prosperity by his benediction. He further told the Sultan that there was no need of his asking him those questions about the Lord, that he himself could consult his own mind and understand all. 'You are,' said he, 'the Lord of Navadvīp and so you have some godliness in you from which emanate all the powers of the earthly rulers. Your intellect must, therefore, be very pure and, therefore, the receptacle of all true knowledge.' The Sultan said that he believed Chaitanya Deva to be no other than God personified. Thus declaring his opinion about the Lord, the Sultan closed the conference and entered his harem."

In Chaitanya Charitāmṛta we find a certain Kāzi addressing Chaitanya as his god.<sup>1</sup>

তোমার চিত্তে চৈতন্যের কৈছে হয় জ্ঞান ।

তোমার চিত্তে যেই লয় সেই ত প্রমাণ ॥

রাজা কহে শুন মোর চিত্তে যেই লয় ।

সাক্ষাৎ ঈশ্বর ইহঁো নাহিক সংশয় ॥

এত বলি রাজা গেল নিজ অভ্যন্তর ।

দবীরখাস আইলা তবে আপনার ঘর ॥

—চৈতন্য চরিতামৃত, ষষ্ঠাখণ্ড, পৃঃ ২৮-২৯ ।

<sup>1</sup> See Chaitanya Charitāmṛta, Ādikhaṇḍa, pp. 49-50.

পীরের লেপনি পরে শুয়ে নিদ্রা যায় ।

নিশি শেষে দেখে স্বপ্ন প্রভুর কৃপায় ॥

The Mahomedans, who were at first great iconoclasts, thus gradually succumbed to the religious influences of the Hindus. Not only many of them became staunch Vaiṣṇavas, but many began to worship the goddess Kālī, Śītalā Devī, Saraswatī, Śiva, etc.

Samser Gāzi, the hero of Samser Gāzir Gān, is said to have once had a dream wherein he found the goddess Kālī, worshipped in the family of the Tipperah Rāj, appearing before him and saying, “Listen to me, oh Gāzi, see I have come to grant you a boon. You will win your battles easily if you would only worship me by sacrificing a human being at my altar.”<sup>1</sup> The Goddess is said to have appeared to him again and in a dream pressed the same proposal when the Gāzi said hesitatingly, “You are the goddess of the Hindus ; I being a Mahomedan, how can I worship you.” The goddess, however, persuaded him in the end to worship her through the intermediary of a Brahmin and as a result of this he won his battles.

The following few lines will throw a flood of light on the friendly feeling that existed between the two communities :

উদয়পুরে ছিল এক মাতাঠাকুরাণী ।  
মহারাজ নিত্য পূজা যোগাইত আনি ॥  
\* \* \* \* \*  
উত্তরমুখি ছিল দেবী দক্ষিণমুখি হল ।  
গাজীর শিয়রে আসি স্বপ্ন দেখাইল ॥

- <sup>1</sup> শুনের সময়ের গাজী চেয়ে দেখ মোরে ।  
আসিয়াছি হেথা আমি বর দিতে তোরে ॥  
মাতাঠাকুরাণী আমি দেবী চিহ্ন কায় ।  
নিদ্রা ছাড়ি উঠ যুদ্ধ জিনিবে হেলায় ॥  
কিন্তু মোরে মহাবলী দেও তুরমান ।  
অবশ্য জিনিবা যুদ্ধ হইবে কল্যাণ ॥

“In a work called ‘Imām Yātrār Puñthi’ we find that the Mahomedan author has a hymn addressed to Saraswatī, the goddess of Learning. In ‘Yāmini Vahāl’ of Karimulla, a Mahomedan is found to pray before the god Śiva. Aptabuddin, the poet of ‘Jāmil Dilārām,’ sent his hero to the nether world ‘to seek a boon from the Saptarṣis or the seven sages of the Hindus.’ In the ‘Bheluā Sundarī’ of Hamidulla, the Brahmins consulted the Koran to find out an auspicious day.

The poet Karamāli, the celebrated writer of the ‘Padas,’ dedicated to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa many of his poems.

A class of Mahomedans earned, and are still earning, their livelihood by singing the praises of the Hindu Goddess Lakṣmī.

পূৰ্বমতে স্বপ্নে দেবী বলিতে লাগিল ।  
 শুনি বিপরীত বাক্য গাজী উত্তরিল ॥  
 আমি হই মোছলমান আপনি ঈশ্বরী ।  
 কেমনে হিন্দুর কাজ বল আমি করি ॥  
 দেবী বলে সকলই বিধাতার হাত ।  
 যখন যাহারে চাহে করেছে নিপাত ॥  
 তাহার নিকটে জান সকলই সমান ।  
 নাহিক প্রভেদ কিছু হিন্দু মুসলমান ॥  
 স্বহস্তে না দেও পূজা ডাকহ ব্রাহ্মণে ।  
 নতুবা জিনিতে তুমি না পারিবা রণে ॥  
 হেন মতে তিনবার স্বপ্ন দেখাইল ।  
 শুনিয়া যুদ্ধের কথা মনে ভয় পেল ॥  
 প্রভাতে উঠিয়া গাজি ভাবি মনে মন ।  
 উপহারে দিল পূজা ডাকিয়া ব্রাহ্মণ ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

—সমসের গাজীর গান, পৃ: ৫৫-৫৭ ।

There are numerous instances in our old Bengali literature of a cordial and friendly relationship subsisting between the Hindus and the Mahomedans in the remote past and the examples I have introduced in this chapter will, I trust, prove this.<sup>1</sup>

For detailed illustrations see "The Nobility of Bengal in Old Bengali Literature" published in the Journal of the Department of Letters, Vol. XXII (Calcutta University), by the author of the present work.

## CHAPTER X

### ARCHITECTURE

The architectural specialities of old Bengal, though not many, deserve special notice, inasmuch as they show the extent to which they are indebted to the architecture of other parts of India and also the extent to which they are indigenous. The people of Bengal developed a peculiar style which contributed much to the general improvement of the art. The Islamic conquest gave an impetus to the architectural development of the whole country, and Bengal, like all other parts of India, felt the impulse in no small degree. "Indo-Saracenic" was the name applied to this style of architecture by Mr. Fergusson, who made the following observation :—

"It is easy to understand, on the other hand, why, in Bengal, the trabecate style never was in vogue. The country is practically without stone, or any suitable material for forming either pillars or beams. Having nothing but brick, it was almost of necessity that they employed arches everywhere and in everything that had any pretensions to permanency. The Bengal style being, however, the only one wholly of brick in India proper has a local individuality of its own, which is curious and interesting, though from the nature of material, deficient in many of the higher qualities of art which characterise the buildings constructed with larger and better materials. Besides elaborating a pointed-arched brick style of their own, the Bengalis introduced a new form of roof, which has had a most important influence on both the Mahomedan and Hindu

The old Bengali literature is full of description of these architectural peculiarities which are noticed in the following pages. In spite of poetic exaggerations, excellent descriptions are to be found in it, giving, in detail, the mode of construction of temples, towns, houses, etc., each of which is dealt with separately.

The building of temples once attained a high degree of perfection as is evidenced from a Dasyu-made temple at Bankura. The following description occurs in the *Chandikāvya* by Dwija Kamalalochana about the construction of a temple.<sup>2</sup>

২ সঙ্কে লয়ে শিল্পিগণ, বিশ্বকর্মা দিল মন  
অম্বিকার দেহরা নিশ্চিত।  
নানাবর্ণে আনি শিলা দেউল নিশ্চয় কৈলা  
শিল্পিগণ লয়া সাবহিতে ॥

“The architect-god Viśwakarmā with his colleagues and assistants applied himself to the task of building the temple of the goddess Ambikā. The temple was built with stones of various colours. Such was the enthusiasm displayed by the architects on the occasion that not a moment was lost and work continued throughout the whole night with the help of lamps made of precious gems. Big blocks of stones were broken into smaller pieces for the pavement of the temple-yard. Between the pieces of stones, valuable gems of variegated colours were inlaid and the effect of the workmanship thus produced was simply wonderful. The colours that were chosen on the occasion were blue, black, white, red and yellow (golden). The spire was fitted with a golden vase and a black pinnace which fluttered in the sky. The walls were built with sundry materials and

|                            |                     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| চারি প্রহর রাতি            | জালিয়া রত্নের বাতি |
| জাগরণে করে নিরমাণ ।        |                     |
| নানারূপ কৈল তাথে           | আপনার মনোরথে        |
| শিরে ধরি অভয়া চরণ ॥       |                     |
| খণ্ড খণ্ড করি শিলা         | নানা রত্ন আরোপিয়া  |
| তার মধ্যে মধ্যে দিল শিলা । |                     |
| নীল কৃষ্ণ শ্বেত রক্ত       | তাহাতে সুবর্ণ বেজ   |
| পঞ্চবর্ণ কৈল নিয়োজনা ॥    |                     |
| দেউল উপর ভাগে              | পঞ্চবর্ণ তাতে লাগে  |
| কনক কলস লাগে চুড়ে ।       |                     |
| তাহাতে পতাকা নেতে          | কৃষ্ণবর্ণ বাস তাতে  |
| পবনে সমূলে তাহে উড়ে ॥     |                     |
| নানারূপ বেড়া কৈল          | তাহাতে দর্পণ দিল    |
| হীরা মতি কাঞ্চন সহিতে ।    |                     |
| দেখিতে সুন্দর তার          | নানারূপে নিরমাণ     |
| শিল্পিগণ লয়া সাবহিতে ॥    |                     |



contained glasses mounted with precious jewels. The magnificent gateways to the temple were four in number, consisting of golden doors. Gold coins were stuck into them to enhance their brilliance. The floor inside the temple was decorated with stones of different colours. Here an altar was made for the image, in front of which another circular altar was constructed, set with coins. To the west of the temple a hundred stone-houses were built, furnished with all the requisites of worship. To the east of the temple, houses for keeping the sacrificial fire ablaze were constructed with precious stones. The architect-god Viśwakarmā then gave his attention to the building of an amusement-hall in the south using his measuring-tape all the while. This magnificent hall was made of stone with excellent sitting accommodation. To the south-

|                                |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| দেউলের চারি দ্বার              | রূপে খণ্ডে অঙ্ককার  |
| কনক কপাট চারি দ্বারে ।         |                     |
| তাথে দিল বহু ধন                | যেন সূর্য্য কিরণ    |
| সন্তোষ করিতে অধিকারে ॥         |                     |
| দেউলের মধ্যভাগে                | নানাবর্ণে শিলা লাগে |
| প্রতিমা স্থাপিতে বেদী কৈল ।    |                     |
| তাহার সম্মুখে কৈল              | মণ্ডলের বেদী হৈল    |
| বহু ধন তাথে লাগাইল ॥           |                     |
| পাষাণে নিৰ্ম্মায় ঘর           | একশত মনোহর          |
| দেউলের পশ্চিম ভাগেতে ।         |                     |
| তাহাতে স্নসজ্জ কৈল             | নানারূপে নিৰ্ম্মাইল |
| রচনা বান্ধিতে বিধিমতে ॥        |                     |
| দেউলের পূর্বে কৈল              | হেমশালা নিৰ্ম্মাইল  |
| নানা রত্নে বিচিত্র নিৰ্ম্মাণ । |                     |
| বিধিমতে মুণ্ড করে              | সূত্র ধরি মধ্যঘরে   |
| বিশ্বকর্মা হুয়া সাবধান ॥      |                     |

east was built a house for the musicians. Its height was great (*lit.* one *yo jana*). Other quarters were then constructed by Viśwakarmā for the accommodation of guests. To the northern side of the temple, artistic cooking-sheds were constructed at a considerable expense. These houses contained crystal pillars and doors. The whole edifice was surrounded with high walls measuring a hundred cubits in length with stone-gates on four sides. A very big tank was excavated by Viśwakarmā inside the temple. Its ghāts were all made of stones. Its water was as clear and

দক্ষিণেতে দিল মন                      সঙ্গে লয়া শিল্পীগণ

নাটশালা করয়ে নিশ্চাণ ।

পাথরে করিল ঘর                      দেখি তাহা মনোহর

শিরে ধরি অম্বিকাচরণ ॥

বসিতে সৰ্বজন                      কৈল দিব্য ভবন

নানাবর্ণে পাথরে নিখিল ।

তা'তে লাগে বহু ধন বালমল অনুক্ষণ

বহু বিধ সুসজ্জ করিল ॥

অগ্নিকোণে বাতাসের                      দেখি অতি মনোহর

উচ্চ কৈল যোজন প্রমাণ ।

আম্ন যত ভবন

রহিতে অতিথিগণ

গড়ে বিশা করিয়া মতন ॥

দেউলের উত্তর দ্বারে                      দিব্য ভোগশালা করে

নানাধনে দেখিতে সুন্দর ।

সেহিত ভবন মাঝে                      ফটিকের স্তম্ভ সাজে

দ্বারেতে কপাট মনোহর ॥

বিশ্বকর্মা দিয়া মন                      সহস্রেক ভবন

যজ্ঞে কৈল দুর্গার পুরীতে ।

পাষাণে বেড়িল পুরী                      শত হাত উচ্চ করি

চারি দ্বারে কপাট শিলাতে ॥

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transparent as crystal with clustering lotuses floating on the surface visited by the bees in quest of honey. The banks were all covered with trees and flower-gardens scattering fragrance in all directions.”<sup>1</sup>

A second account of temple-building is given below from Kavikaṅkan Mukundarām's Chaṇḍikāvya, pp. 32-33.<sup>2</sup>

পুরী মধ্যে সরোবরে                      বিশাই নির্মাণ করে  
দীর্ঘ গ্রন্থ প্রমাণ বিশাল ।  
পাথরে বাঙ্কিল ঘাট                      আর যত নাছবাট  
তা'তে তোর ফটিক আকার ।  
জলেতে পঙ্কজ শোভে                      অলি ভ্রমে মধু লোভে  
তীরে তরু দেখিতে সুন্দর ॥

<sup>1</sup> পুষ্পের উদ্ভান করে                      দেখি অতি মনোহরে  
সৌরভ ধাইছে দিগন্তর ॥

আনন্দিত বিশ্বকর্ম                      পুরে করে নানা কর্ম  
অভয়ার মনোরথ কাজে ।

প্রতিমা আনিয়া যবে                      দেউলে স্থাপিল তবে  
কৈলাস সমান পুরী সাজে । ইত্যাদি ।

— দ্বিজ কমললোচনের চণ্ডীকাব্য,

বঙ্গসাহিত্য-পরিচয়, প্রথম ভাগ,

পৃঃ ৩০৭-৩০৯ ।

<sup>2</sup> সাতান্ন বন্দে বিশাই করিলেন হুতা ।  
ইন্দ্রনীল পাষাণে রচিত কৈল পোতা ॥  
মুণ্ডে আরোপিয়া গিরি আনে হনুমান্ ।  
নিশির ভিতরে দেউল করিল নির্মাণ ॥  
হীরা-নীলা-মরকতে করিলেন চূড়া ।  
রসাল দর্পণে তার চারিদিগ বেড়া ॥  
ধবল চামর শিরে ত্রিশাখ পতাকা ।  
রাকাপতি বেড়ি যেন ফিরয়ে বলাকা ॥

“First a measurement was taken by Viśwakarmā with a piece of thread. Then the plinth was made with a kind of blue stone. Hanumān brought an entire hill, carrying it on his head, for the construction of the temple of *Chandī*. In the course of a single night the temple was constructed by Viśwakarmā. The spire was decorated with diamonds, emeralds and sapphires. Looking glasses were fitted on the sides of the spire. A white *chowrie* and triple flags also decorated it. Arrays of corals and pearls shed such a brilliant lustre in the temple that it seemed that the darkness of the new-moon night had been replaced by the grandeur of the full moon. Pictures of various description were made to adorn the temple of the goddess *Chandī*. The image of the goddess was made of gold and two golden jugs were placed on either side. The image of the god Śiva seated on his favourite bull, the god Kārtikeya mounted on his peacock, and the god Gaṇeś on his mouse were all made of gold. Hanumān dug tanks by simply scratching the earth. Their banks resembled small hillocks, so much earth was taken out to make the tanks deep. The ghāts and paths were all constructed with stones of various colours. The water of the river Bhogavatī (which flows in the nether world) oozed up to fill the tanks. Fruit and flower gardens were finally laid out on the sides of the tanks.”

থরে থরে প্রবাল মুকুতা পাঁতি পাঁতি  
 পূর্ণিমা সমান হৈল অমাবস্তা রাতি ॥  
 নানা চিত্র করিল যে করিয়া যুগতি ।  
 হেমময় তথি আরোপিল ভগবতী ॥  
 কাঞ্চনের ছই ঝারি বুঝে মহেশ ।  
 ময়ূরে কার্তিক লেখে মুখাতে গণেশ ॥

Yet another description of a temple by the celebrated poet Bhāratchandra may not be quite out of place here.<sup>1</sup>

“The architect-god Viśwakarmā made the temple of Annapurnā with precious stones. The altar raised on this occasion was also made of gems. Viśwakarmā himself was struck with the beauty of the temple. He raised walls round the temple and inside it excavated a tank with ghāts, adorned with diamonds. The four sides of the tank were decorated with emeralds and sapphires. The *Pātāl-Gaṅgā* or the Bhogavatī (which flows in the Hades) oozed up into the tank, such was its depth. The

হনুমান্ অভয়ার লয়ে অনুমতি ।  
 পাষাণে রচিত কৈল পূজার পদ্ধতি ॥  
 নখে কোঁড়ে হনুমান্ দীঘি সরোবর ।  
 চারিখান পাহাড় কৈল যেন মহীধর ॥  
 পাষাণে রচিত কৈল চারিখান ঘাট ।  
 নানাবর্ণ পাষাণে রচিত নাছবাট ॥  
 শূত্র দেখি সরোবর বীর মহাবল ।  
 পাতাল ভেদিয়া তোলে ভোগবতী জল ॥  
 সরোবর বেড়ি বিশাই করিল উত্তান ।  
 রসাল পনস রস্তা রোপে হনুমান্ ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

কবিকঙ্কণ মুকুন্দরামের চণ্ডীকাব্য, পৃ: ৩৩ ।

1 বিশ্বকর্মা গুনি, নিজপুণ্য গুনি,  
 দেউল কৈলা নিৰ্ম্মাণ ।

\* \* \* \* \*  
 রতন দেউল, ভুবনে অতুল,  
 কোটি রবি পরকাশ ।

দেউল ভিতরে মণিবেদীপরে,  
 চিন্তামণির প্রতিমা ।

water was very cool, odorous, deep and pure. Crystal swans were made for the tank. Their beaks and red feet were made with corals. Lotuses of various kinds were artistically made with various precious stones and the bees on them were also made with azure-coloured gems. Birds and aquatic animals of multifarious types were also formed of the same kinds of precious materials.”

The following account of temple-building is to be found in the Dharmamangal Poems of Sītārām Dās.<sup>1</sup>

দেউলের শোভা দেখি বিশাই মহিলা ।  
 চৌদিকে প্রাচীর দিয়া পুরী নিৰ্ম্মাইলা ॥  
 সম্মুখে করিলা সরোবর মনোহর ।  
 মাণিকে বান্ধিলা ঘাট দেখিতে সুন্দর ॥  
 সূর্য্যকান্ত চন্দ্রকান্ত আদি মণিগণ ।  
 দিয়া কৈলা চারিপার অতি সুশোভন ॥  
 তুলিলা পাতাল-গন্ধা ভোগবতী জল ।  
 সুশীতল সুবাসিত গভীর নিৰ্ম্মল ॥  
 গড়িলা ফটিক দিয়া রাজহংসগণ ।  
 প্রবালে গড়িলা ঠোঁট সুরঙ্গ চরণ ॥  
 সূর্য্যকান্ত মণি দিয়া গড়িলা কমল ।  
 চন্দ্রকান্ত মণি দিয়া গড়িলা উৎপল ॥  
 নীলমণি দিয়া গড়ে মধুকর পাতি ।  
 নানা পক্ষী জলচর গড়ে নানা জাতি ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

ভারতচন্দ্রের অন্নদামঙ্গল, পৃঃ ১৪৮-১৪৯ ।

<sup>1</sup> কামাখ্যার মেড় গিয়া পাইল ঈশানে ।  
 ধৰ্ম্মমঙ্গল সীতারাম দাস ভণে ॥  
 দেখিল দেবীর মেড় যোজন-প্রমাণ ।  
 বিনা বায় শঙ্খ বাজে দণ্ডীর নিশান ॥

“The temple of Kāmākhya Devī was situated to the south-west of the city of Kāmrup. The area of the temple extended over one ‘*yojana*’ (twelve miles). There the conch-shells sounded even without being blown. There were the flags attached to the staffs to adorn the temple. The temple itself was five thousand cubits in height and the flags one thousand cubits. There were forty-eight gates and eighty-eight stations for the sentries. The northern side of the temple was occupied by the Yogīs and the north-eastern by the Dākinīs, engaged in performing mystic rites. The hero Kālu surveyed everything in connection with the temple.”

In spite of poetic exaggerations apparent in these descriptions, it cannot be denied that there are some grains of truth in them. Elaborate description of stones being used as materials leads us to suppose that though brick was the usual material, stone was not quite unknown. Although Fergusson is loath to give the Bengalis the credit of possessing any knowledge of stone-buildings, he has been constrained to admit that they knew the use of a kind of black marble which, according to him, ‘seems to be an indurated potstone of very fine grain, and which takes a beautiful polish. Many fragments of Hindu art in this

পাঁচ হাজার হাত উচ্চ দেউল গঠন ।

পতাকা হাজার হাত ঠেকিল গগন ॥

বারগুণা দেহারা বাইশ গুণা থানা ।

উত্তর দেউল দেখে যোগীদের থানা ॥

ঈশানে ডাকিনী সাধে আপন সাধন ।

কালুবীর সকল করেন নিরীক্ষণ ॥

ধর্মরাজের গীত, সীতারাম দাস

material are found among the ruins, and if carefully examined, might enable us to restore the style.' <sup>1</sup>

One of the peculiar features in connection with the building of temples was the use of glass.<sup>2</sup> These were fitted to the walls and even to the spires, probably to enhance the lustre when the sun's rays were reflected upon them. The whole temple thus looked dazzling and inspired awe and reverence in the minds of the pious pilgrims.

It appears that the materials ordinarily used for the construction of spires were of different colours—blue, black,

<sup>1</sup> See among others *Sūnya Purāṇa* (Dharmasthān') by Rāmāi Paṇḍit (10th-11th century).

See *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, by Fergusson, Vol. I, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> See *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, by Fergusson, Vol I, pp. 322-325 :—

"There is one other peculiarity common to both Hindu and Jaina architecture in the north of India that requires notice, before proceeding to describe particular examples. It is the form of the towers or spires called *Sikharas* '*Vimanas*' which invariably surmount the cell in which the images of the *Tirthaṅkaras* are invariably placed in oblong or square cells and those of Hindu deities in square—generally cubical cells of no great dimension, and that these cells receive their light from the doorway only. It seems also an invariable rule that the presence and position of the cell should be indicated externally by a tower and spire, and that these towers though square or nearly so in plan should have a curvilinear outline in elevation . . . . . Take for instance the celebrated Black Pagoda at Kanarak in Orissa. The upper part of the tower, to some extent, overhangs its base.

It bends inward towards the summit, and is surmounted by what is called an '*Amlaka*'—a massive circular coping stone, which supports a vase called '*amritakalasa*' or '*Amrita karaka*,' i.e., '*dew vessel*.' Whatever its origin this '*amlaka*' is generally surmounted by a flat dome of reverse curvature, in the centre of which stands the '*Kalasa*,' '*Karaka*,' or pinnacle, in the form of a vase, generally of very beautiful and graceful design...The one hypothesis that occurs to me as sufficient to account for this peculiarity is to assume that it was a constructive necessity. If we take for instance an assumed section of the diagram (Woodcut No. 184, p. 324), it will be seen how easily a very tall pointed horizontal arch, like that of the Treasury at Mycenae referred to above, p. 312, would fit its external form. In that case we might assume that the tower at Bodh-Gaya took a straight-lined form like the doorway at Missolonghi and the gate of Lions at Mycenae, while the Hindus took the more graceful curvilinear shape, which certainly was more common in remote classical antiquity, and as is found in Persia may have reached India at a remote period."



white, red and yellow. The spire contained a vase (usually golden) which was characteristic of a temple.<sup>1</sup>

The pillars<sup>2</sup> seem to be an essential element in the construction of temples. The description of crystal pillars by poets, as mentioned before, might not be all a myth.

We hear of these crystal pillars even in our nursery stories. The use of crystal which is found not only in connection with the pillars but also in general construction-works, as will be shown later on, proves the existence of glass trade in Bengal. This fact is also substantiated by the *Maṇasāmaṅgal* poems (as of *Baṇśīdās*) wherein we find mention of glass as an important item of export. The 'Periplus of the Erythrean Sea' fully substantiates this fact. Mention of crystal is also found in the *Mahābhārata*, *Sabhā Parva*, wherein we learn that *Duryyodhana* mistook a piece of crystal to be water and thereby got discomfited. Pillars, whether made of crystal or some other materials, are in themselves sufficiently interesting and as such deserve special notice.<sup>3</sup>

The following parts of a temple are worthy of special mention :—

|       |       |             |
|-------|-------|-------------|
| (i)   | পোতা  | ... Plinth. |
| (ii)  | বেড়া | ... Wall.   |
| (iii) | কলস   | ... Vessel. |

<sup>1</sup> See among others *Sūnya Purāṇa* (Dharmasthān) by *Rāmāi Paṇḍit* (10th-11th century).

<sup>2</sup> See among others *Rāmāi Paṇḍit's Sūnya Purāṇa* (Dharmasthān).

<sup>3</sup> "The pillars (*i.e.*, *Stambhas* or *Lāts*) are common to all the styles of Indian architecture. With the Buddhists they were employed to bear inscriptions on their shafts, with emblems or animals on their capitals. With the Jains they were generally *Dīpḍāns* or lamp-bearing pillars, but sometimes supporting quadruple figures of a Jina; with the Vaiṣṇavas they generally bore statues of *Garuḍa* or *Hauumān*; with the Śaivas they bore the *triśūla* symbol or were *Dīpḍāns* and flagstaffs; but, whatever their destination, they were always among the most original and frequently the most elegant, production of Indian art."

|        |           |  |
|--------|-----------|--|
| (iv)   | চূড়া     | Spire.   |
| (v)    | বেদি      | Altar.   |
| (vi)   | হোমশালা   | Place for sacrificial fire.                                    |
| (vii)  | নাটশালা   | Amusement-Hall (Theatre).                                      |
| (viii) | বাগ্‌ঘর   | Music-Hall.  |
| (ix)   | অতিথিশালা | Guest-house.   |
| (x)    | ভোগশালা   | A shed for the cooking of offerings<br>to the deity. (Kitchen) |
| (xi)   | স্তম্ভ .  | Pillar.  |
| (xii)  | নাছবাট    | Path.  |
| (xiii) | সরোবর     | Tank.  |
| (xiv)  | উদ্যান    | Garden.  |
| (xv)   | প্রাচীর   | Outer wall.  |
| (xvi)  | দ্বার     | Gate and door.   |

In Bhāratchandra's *Annadāmaṅgal* the description of artificial birds and lotuses, etc., made for decorative purposes attracts our admiration. The location of the different compartments of a temple has been clearly indicated by Dvija Kamalalochan.<sup>1</sup>

### *Forts and Fortified Cities.*

The *Dharmamaṅgal* poems supply us with information regarding the knowledge of the Bengali people about the

"In the south of India among the Jains, as mentioned in a later chapter, such pillars are very common, usually standing singly in front of the temples, and were apparently intended to carry quadruple figures of Tirthaṅkaras known as Chaumukhs. One class of the stambhas in Hindu temples was intended to carry lamps at festivals of which woodcut No. 203 (Kailas temple, Elura) represents a specimen, but another class the Dhawaja-stambhas like the above at Elura, are frequently in pairs and bear the symbol of the sect—Triśūla or Garuḍa."—Fergusson, pp. 54 and 347. The mention of pillars is found in early Bengali works.—See *Sūnya Purāṇ*, *Dharmasthān*, 20-21.

<sup>1</sup> Curiously enough the recently discovered ruined temple of Oniah in Egypt bears similarity with the Bengali temples.

See Egypt and Israel by Petrie, pp. 102-105.

construction of forts and citadels. These poems, though full of exaggeration and poetic fancies, contain an element of truth in them. The following description of the citadel of Mayanāgaḍ from the Dharmamaṅgal poems by Govindarām Banerjee may be cited by way of illustration :—

“The eastern gate was the principal one and made of stone. It was so high that the birds could not cross it. The stone gates had no openings even for an ant to pass, which excited the admiration of Lakṣmī who worshipped them with offerings of flower and water and went to the northern gate. It was made of steel and fitted in a steel wall in such a way that when closed even the wind had no access to it. After worshipping this gate too, Lakṣmī walked on to the western gate. This side of the fort was made of copper and so a copper-gate stood there. It was built in such a way that it hardly had any opening even for a thread to pass. After duly finishing his worship here, Lakṣmī visited the southern gate which was made of wood. The buildings on this side were all made of wood. The southern gate was also duly worshipped. It was constructed in such a way that there was no room even for the dust to enter.”<sup>1</sup>

Sītārām Dās, another author of Dharmamaṅgal poems, gives us some sidelight of the fortified cities of the olden days in his description of the defence of the city of Kāmrūp.

- <sup>1</sup> পাথরে নির্মিত পূর্ব প্রধান দুয়ার ।  
 পক্ষী পার হতে পারে পর্বত আকার ॥  
 পাথরা কপাট পিপীড়ার নাহি পথ ।  
 দেখিয়া লক্ষ্মীর হ'ল পূর্ণ মনোরথ ॥  
 পুষ্প জল দিয়া পূর্ব দ্বার বাঁচাইয়া ।  
 উত্তর দ্বারেতে লক্ষ্মী উত্তরিল গিয়া ॥

“The hero (Kālu) passed through the outermost gate which was one *yojana* in height, resembling a mountain. The defensive barrier which Kālu met was a trench or moat eighty-one cubits in width. Then he met a bush of canes, interspersed with ‘*keā*’ shrubs, extending over a space of sixty cubits. Around this was another trench, the very sight of which frightened away the enemy. Its depth was seven cubits and breadth fifty cubits, thus resembling a river of ordinary dimensions. In it there were crocodiles and ‘Makaras’ (fabulous dolphins) in large numbers. Kālu passed the seven defensive structures and finally reached the city.”<sup>1</sup>

লোহার প্রাচীর দ্বারে লোহার কপাট ।  
 কেমনে আসিব সৈন্ত নাহি বায়ু বাট ॥  
 বাচায়া উত্তর দ্বারে দিয়া পুষ্পজল ।  
 পশ্চিম দ্বারে গেলা লক্ষ্মী পায়াদল ॥  
 অরুণ কিরণ ধরে তাম্র গড় খান ।  
 তাম্রের কপাট বিশ্বকর্মার নির্মাণ ॥  
 সূতার সঞ্চার নাঞি নিবিড় কপাট ।  
 লক্ষ্মী বলে কোন পথে প্রবেশিব ঠাট ॥  
 পুষ্পজল দিয়া দ্বার করিয়া পূজন ।  
 দক্ষিণ গড়ের দ্বারে দিল দরশন ॥  
 কাষ্ঠের কপাট দ্বারে অট্টালিকা গড় ।  
 দিল পুষ্পজল দ্বারে সামন্ত ঝকর ॥  
 ধূলিরেণু প্রবেশ করিতে নাঞি তায় । ইত্যাদি ।

গোবিন্দরাম বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের ধর্মমঞ্জল

- <sup>1</sup> প্রবেশ করিল বীর সমুখ দ্বার ।  
 যোজন-প্রমাণ উচ্চ পর্কিত আকার ॥  
 গড় দেখি সমুখে একাশী হাত খাণ্ডা ।  
 সাড়ি পদ্ম ঘোড়ার বলিতে নাঞি দাগু ॥  
 তারপর বেতগড় ঘাট হাত খানা ।  
 কেআবনে দেখি কত পিণ্ডাসার থানা ॥

Another description of the fortified city of Burdwan as given by Bhāratchandra in his Annadāmaṅgal may be of interest in this connection.<sup>1</sup>

“There were seven fortifications surrounding the city of Burdwan. In the outermost compound resided the ‘Kolāposhas,’ *e. g.*, the English, the Dutch, the French, the Danes and other foreigners (all famous artillerymen) who came there for trade from distant countries. Within the next defensive walls there were the Mahomedans of all denominations, *e. g.*, the Saiyads, the Malliks, the Sheikhs, the Moghuls and the Pāthāns. Some of them were reading Turkish and Arabic with an admixture of Persian while others counted beads connected with the name of Suleman. Around the third fortification were the brave and warlike Kṣatriyas, expert in the use of arms. Within the fourth enclosure lived the brave Rājput warriors who acted as guards of the king’s palanquin, while within the fifth dwelt the Rāhuts (ambassadors)

গুয়া গড় গভীর দেখিয়া প্রাণ উড়ে ।

সাত হাত দরিয়া পঞ্চাশ হাত আড়ে ॥

লাখে লাখে কুন্তীর মকর অবতার ।

অইরূপ সাতগড় হয় গেল পার ॥

ধর্মরাজের গীত ( সীতারাম দাস ) ।

1 প্রথম গড়েতে দেখে কোলাপোষের নিবাস ।

ইংরেজ ওলন্দাজ ফিরিঙ্গী ফরাস ॥

দিনেমার এলেমাল করে গোলন্দাজী ।

সফরিয়া নানাদ্রব্য আনয়ে জাহাজী ॥

দ্বিতীয় গড়েতে দেখে যত মুসলমান ।

সৈয়দ মল্লিক সেখ মোগল পাঠান ॥

তুরকী আরবী পড়ে ফারসী মিশালে ।

হিলি মিলি জপে সদা ছিলিমিলি মালে ॥

together with the Bhāt<sup>1</sup> Brāhmaṇs who were employed as ambassadors and envoys to foreign courts. Inside the sixth resided the Bundelās (Rajputs from Bundelkhand) who acted as keepers of the royal treasury which required the observance of strict vigilance. The millionaire merchants fixed that place as their abode. Thus visiting the six defences the prince of Kāñchi entered the seventh or the innermost defence-walls.”

The peculiar notion of the Bengali poets that a fortified city should have seven defensive enclosures might be based on facts. About the number of defensive fortifications they curiously enough stuck to the mystic number of seven. The idea that a defensive battlement should be surrounded by bushes and prickly shrubs remind us of the similar contrivances adopted by the Africans for defensive fencing-works in which these bushes are still employed and are

তৃতীয় গড়েতে দেখে ক্ষত্রিয় সকল ।  
 অস্ত্র শস্ত্রে বিশারদ সমরে অটল ॥  
 চতুর্থ গড়েতে দেখে যত রাজপুত ।  
 রাজার পালঙ্ক রাখে যুদ্ধে মজবুত ॥  
 পঞ্চম গড়েতে দেখে যতক রাহুত ।  
 ভাট বৈসে তার কাছে ষাতায়াতে দূত ॥  
 ষষ্ঠ গড়ে দেখে যত বৌদেলার থানা ।  
 আটাআটি সেই ঘরে থাকে মালখানা ॥  
 সেই গড়ে নানা জাতি বৈসে মহাজন ।  
 লক্ষ কোটি পদ্ম শঙ্খে সংখ্যা করে ধন ॥

\* \* \*

এইরূপে ছয় গড় সকল দেখিয়া ।  
 প্রবেশে ভিতর গড় অভয়া ভাবিয়া ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

—ভারতচন্দ্রের অন্নদামঙ্গল (পৃঃ ২৬০-২৬১)

<sup>1</sup> About the institution of Bhāts see Indo-Aryans, Vol. II, p. 293.

known as the 'Zariba.'<sup>1</sup> In the late Madhist War in Africa this kind of fencing was much resorted to by the Egyptian army for protection against the Madhist incursions. We are not quite aware of any particular case of a fortified city in Bengal exactly as described by the poets, but the extensive ruins of Rāmpāl (in East Bengal—the last capital of the Senas), Gauḍ, Dhekur and Maynāgaḍ suggest the existence of such things.

The custom of worshipping the gates of a fort bears strange similarity with the worshipping of the ships on the eve of a sea-voyage. The extraordinary height and thickness of the walls of a fortified city,<sup>2</sup> though now may seem to be a myth, might not be quite so, as the instances

<sup>1</sup> About a Zariba at Bir Gowi in Darfur, Slatin Pasha described as follows :—

The station at Bir Gowi "was surrounded by a square Zariba, each side of which measured about one hundred and eighty paces, and consisted of a thorn barricade about twelve feet thick and six feet high ; on the inside the ground was raised to enable the men to fire over it from a platform, and the whole was surrounded by a ditch nine feet wide, and about nine feet deep."—*Fire and Sword in the Sudan*, by Slatin Pasha, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Traces of a very thick and massive wall have been recently discovered in recent excavations at Tell-el-Yehudiyeh about twenty miles north of Cairo, which bears striking similarity with the description of our poets and show that bigness was perhaps the fashion in the ancient world (*cf.* the great wall of China). That walls of stupendous nature might be built with brick is really wonderful. Bengal was perhaps not behindhand in this respect from Assyria and Egypt. The following lines are quoted about the fortification of Tell-el-Yehudiyeh (surrounding the old Oniah temple) from Petrie :

"Working over from the eastern side of the hill first blocks of brickwork were met with, sunk in the ground, which had formed the foundation of a massive fortification wall along the edge of the platform. Next a few bricks and scraps of wall and further on stood the base of the opposite wall of a court. Then at the north end was a thick foundation, part of the outer wall and across the court was another narrow foundation dividing it in two, forming an outer and inner court. At the south end of this was a very massive pile of brick foundation, 55 feet long and 17 feet wide, all of solid brickwork, excepting a narrow groove of the axis..... The large square building thus marked out, over 70 feet by 50 feet, is on the highest part of the mound and completely dominated the temple courts; the west face of the great mound, the northern tower, and both of the approaches. It must have been the castle or citadel. Of the great stairway from the plain there

of the forts at Bharatpur (C. I.) and Gwalior may be cited in this connection. The ruins of the Mahomedan forts at Dacca and Egārasindur show the stupendous structure of Indian forts. The moats of the mediaeval fortresses of Europe with the draw-bridge and portcullis bear some resemblance to the defensive structures of ancient India and so of ancient Bengal.

The principle of town-planning followed the time-honoured customs and the Śāstras, modified according to the taste of the Mahomedans in later days when the latter were the rulers of the country. Each guild generally occupied one part of a town. Moreover, a capital city possessed concentric circles of defences and walls as the deserted places at Delhi, Agra and other places would signify. Bernier described in clear terms the arrangement of defences of a Moghul city which was sometimes nothing but a moving camp. Bengal being an important part of the Moghul Empire surely adopted the practice. The description of Burdwan by Bhāratchandra in the celebrated *Annadāmaṅgal* and the concentric walls and residences was perhaps an exact representation of a Mahomedan city wherein people lived near or apart according to their connection with the existing government. Similar was the condition of Pekin city under the Emperors. In this city around the Imperial quarters lived the Mandarins or government officials and the Manchus (people of the same nationality as the Emperors). The Chinese lived somewhat apart—outside the walls. The foreigners including the foreign legations lived at the outermost part of the city. Such a system is still partly in vogue in China.

remain two thick walls of brick, still eleven feet high, although the upper part and all the stairs have been destroyed. The walls were nearly four feet thick and between them the space is filled with over six feet of gravel and sand, to form a basis for steps," etc., etc. *Egypt and Israel*, by Petrie, pp. 102-104.



The following description of a town by Dwija Abhirām will give an idea of a Hindu town.<sup>1</sup>

“The Pāṇḍavas saw with wondering eyes the beauty of the city of Maṇipur, where all were followers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The houses were built on all sides of the town. They were tinged with the paint of ‘Hiṅgul’ and ‘Haritāl.’ The roofs were decorated with flowers. There were exquisite cane-works on the roofs adorned with peacock-feathers. The spires were made of gold and jewellery and contained white flags. There were temples attached to every house and ‘Maths’ everywhere.....The

<sup>1</sup> In the Sanskrit work Arthaśāstra by Kauṭilya, description of houses and town-building is to be found. The Jātaka stories (1st 227 and 346, 4th 376, 5th and 6th 577) add much to our knowledge of house-building in ancient India including Bengal. See also an article ‘Arthaśāstrē Samājchitra’ by N. Banerjee in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā.

হৃদয় পরম সুখে                      আখি অনিমিথে দেখে  
 মনিপুর অতি সুমোহন ।  
 অম্লপম পুরী শোভা                      জগজন-মনোলোভা  
 সবে তথি কৃষ্ণ পরায়ণ ॥  
 বিচিত্র নির্মাণ ঘর                      চারিপাশে থরে থর  
 বিচিত্র হিঙ্গুল হরিতালে ।  
 অম্লপম পুরী শোভা                      জগজন মনোলোভা  
 কুসুম রচিত চাকু চালে ॥  
 বাক্সে সুরঙ্গিন বেত                      আচ্ছাদি বসন নেত  
 শিখিপুচ্ছ সুমোহন সাজে ।  
 মণিমুকুতার ঝারা                      উপরে কনক বারা  
 তথি ঝেত পতাকা বিরাজে ॥  
 গৃহে গৃহে স্ননিকট                      বিচিত্র দেউল মঠ  
 ক্ষেত্রী বৈষ্ণু শূদ্র নানাজাতি ।  
 ধূপ দীপ উপহারে                      কৃষ্ণ আরাধন করে  
 কি পুরুষ কিবা নারী তথি ॥

people were all devout worshippers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Every house possessed a hall set apart for the discussions of the Sāstras. These were very artistically made. The following description though containing exaggerations might bear some truth showing the idea entertained by Bengali poets about ancient cities.

“The houses were built of glass or crystal with the ‘Jhārā,’ or vases, bedecked with pearls, with golden flags fluttering above. The roofs too were made of crystal. There were tall trees of various species in the city with stone-pavements round their base. At every door of the houses there were betel-nut and cocoa-nut trees (auspicious signs). The houses at Mathurā (capital of Kāṁsa) were of various colours resembling, as it were, the paradise of Indra.”<sup>1</sup>

দেখি মণিপুরময়                      গৃহে গৃহে দেবালয়  
 বিচিত্র চৌখণ্ডি শাজ্জশালা ।  
 সতে রূপ গুণময়                      অঙ্গে আভরণচয়  
 শত শত শিশু করে খেলা ॥ ইত্যাদি  
 —দ্বিজ অভিরামের মহাভারত ।

স্ফটিকের ঘর সব মুকুতার ঝারা ।  
 নেতের পতাকা উড়ে সূবর্ণের ধারা ॥  
 সূধাকর নিখিত ঘর স্ফটিকের চাল ।  
 বিচিত্র বিচিত্র বৃক্ষ দেখিতে বিশাল ॥  
 নানাবৃক্ষ দেখে সব বাঁধান পাথরে ।  
 গুয়া নারিকেল শোভে দুয়ারে দুয়ারে ॥  
 নানাবর্ণে বিচিত্র কংশের মধুপুরী ।  
 স্বর্ণে শোভা করে ঘন ইন্দ্রের নগরী ॥

—ভাগবত (মালাধর বসু) ।

The city of Burdwan<sup>1</sup> as described by Bhāratchandra furnishes us with an accurate picture of a Hindu city, modelled after the Islamic style.

“The prince of Kāñchi left the Police station and inspected the various quarters of the city. He saw the workshops of the thirty-six sub-castes of the Hindus. The royal residence stood at the centre of the city, all other houses clustering around it. There were sixteen lanes and thirty-six bazars. A large number of elephants were tied down to pillars in batches, and were emitting ichor and moving the trunks to and fro. The horses imported from various countries such as Iraq, Turkey, Arabia and countries overseas were all tied to the pillars, in their thousands. Who can count the number of camels, asses and the mules? Such was also the case with birds. Domestic animals and birds of all descriptions were kept

- <sup>1</sup> চলে রায় পাছু করি কোটালের থানা ।  
 দেখে জাতি ছত্রিশ ছত্রিশ কারখানা ॥  
 চৌদিগে সহর মাঝে মহল রাজার ।  
 আট আট ঘোল গলি ছত্রিশ বাজার ॥  
 থামে বান্ধা মত্ত হাতি হলকে হলকে ।  
 শুড় নাড়ে মদ ঝাড়ে ঝলকে ঝলকে ॥  
 ইরাকী তুরাকী তাজী আরবী জাহাজী ।  
 হাজার হাজার দেখে থামে বান্ধা বাজী ॥  
 উট গাধা খচর গনিতে কেবা পারে ।  
 পালিয়াছে পশু পক্ষী যে আছে সংসারে ॥  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 ঘরে ঘরে দেবালয় শঙ্খঘণ্টারব ।  
 শিবপূজা চণ্ডীপাঠ যজ্ঞ মহোৎসব ॥  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 দেখিয়া নগর শোভা বাখানে সুন্দর ।  
 সম্মুখে দেখেন সরোবর মনোহর ॥

in this city. Temples were to be seen in every house and the sound of conch-shells and bells heard, and the worship of the God Siva, recitations of the descriptions about the exploits of the goddess Chandi, sacrifices, and Mahotsavas (the Vaisṇava religious feasts) were performed. The prince now saw a fine tank before him, the four ghāts of which were constructed with lime-stone. By the side of each of these ghāts was to be seen a temple (dedicated to Siva) crowded by a great number of Śaiva ascetics, conspicuous for their matted locks, and bodies covered with ashes. There were flower-gardens all around the tank. The fragrance of flowers was carried in all directions by the southern wind (*lit.* the wind coming from the Malayas). The water of the tank looked transparently clear with a large number of aquatic birds floating on the surface. The lotuses of all colours, such as white, red, blue and yellow, adorned the tank.<sup>1</sup> The grandeur of the city struck the prince."

শানে বান্ধা চারি ঘাট শিবালয় চারি ।

অবধূত জটাভঙ্গধারী সারি সারি ॥

চারি পাড়ে স্তম্ভাকৃ পুষ্পের উপবন ।

গন্ধ লয়ে মন্দ বহে মলয় পবন ॥

টল টল করে জল মন্দ মন্দ বয় ।

নানা জলচর পক্ষীখেলিয়া বেড়ায় ॥

শ্বেত রক্ত নীল পীতশত শতচ্ছদ ।

ফুটে পদ্ম কুমুদ কহলার কোকনদ ॥

—ভারতচন্দ্রের অন্নদামঙ্গল (পৃ: ২৬২-২৬৪) ।

<sup>1</sup> Much care was taken for the excavation of tanks in old days. The following description of tanks by Hiuen Tsang left by him on his visit to the great University of Nālandā may not be out of place here.

"All around pools of translucent water shone with the open petals of the blue lotus-flowers; then and there the lovely *kanaka*-trees hung down their deep red blossoms and woods of dark mango-trees spread their shade between them."

—Indian Sculpture and Painting, by E. B. Havell, p. 106.

The following were the divisions of a city in ancient days (specially a capital city) which deserve special notice :—

- |        |                  |     |   |
|--------|------------------|-----|---|
| (i)    | কারখানা          | .   | Workshops (owned by various castes).                                |
| (ii)   | চক               | ... | The chowk-bazar or the central Market-place.                        |
| (iii)  | কোতয়ালী চবুতারা |     | The police station.   |
| (iv)   | সরোবর            | ... | Tanks.  |
| (v)    | শিবালয়          | ... | Temples (dedicated to god Siva).                                    |
| (vi)   | ফাটক             | ... | Prison-house.   |
| (vii)  | রাজার মহল        | ... | Royal palace.   |
| (viii) | মালখানা          | ... | Treasury or Strong-room.  |
| (ix)   | রাজপুতের গড়     | ... | Fortified barracks for the Rājput body-guard of the king.           |
| (x)    | রাহতের গড়       | ... | Legations.  |
| (xi)   | মহল্লা           | ... | Separate residential houses for the various castes and professions. |

These exist even to this day in many of the towns of India. Dwija Abhirām, Mukundarām and particularly Bhāratchandra described at length the main divisions of a city very much on the same lines.

The royal palace<sup>1</sup> contained nine gates, the court-apartments for guards and treasury and inner apartments. From the eleventh century downwards we get almost the same picture of a Hindu court except in so far as it was modified after the Mahomedan style in the later days. The court-house was perhaps situated inside the palace and possessed nine gates, the city itself having seven defensive walls and gates as we see in Bhāratchandra's Annadāmaṅgal. The royal palace was probably a small

<sup>1</sup> See Bhārat Chandra's Annadāmaṅgal, Mayanāmatī Songs, Jayanārāyaṇa's Harililā and Kṛttivās's Autobiographical Accounts.

town in itself inside the bigger area of the city, like the Kremlin of Moscow. The court-room was a big hall with rows of pillars supporting the roof. The 'Ārajbegi,' an officer in charge of petitions (addressed by people to the king) usually took his stand by the side of a pillar. In Bhāratchandra's Annadāmaṅgal we find that horses and elephants were tied to the pillars. From what remote period of time such a custom had been prevailing in this country is not known, but it may be said, that it was considered as enhancing the grandeur of royalty in the days of Islamic rule. Of what type these pillars were we do not know, but they might resemble those favoured by the Jains for serving the purpose of lamp-stands.

Adjacent to the royal palace was located the royal treasury. It was perhaps very strongly built as the description of Bhāratchandra shows.

The Chowk-bazar or the chāndni-chowk (the market-place of the city) was usually located close to the royal palace and built in accordance with the Islamic practice.

The 'Bālākhānā' or a two-storied house formed a part of the royal residence and was perhaps used by the inmates of the royal house to watch the people on special occasions.

The 'Nahabat' or a small room for the musicians was always an important adjunct to the royal palace in the days of the Islamic rule. The rich also possessed it as they do now.

The Kotowālī or the office of the prefect of police with the jail attached to it deserves mention. The jail was known as the 'Kutghar' or 'Bandi-ghar' and was generally an underground cell, similar to what is known to have been existing in Europe in the 18th century and so vividly described in the celebrated work, 'The Count of Monte Cristo.' The Dharma songs, the Chaṇḍī-Kāvya and the Mymensingh ballads (recently brought to light by Dr. Sen

of the Calcutta University) give elaborate description of the prison-houses of old.

The prison-house has been thus described by Narasimha Vasu in his Dharma songs, in connection with the imprisonment of Lāusen.<sup>1</sup> “Lausen was arrested and taken to the prison by order of the minister. Shackles were put on his hands and chains round his neck and a heavy stone was placed on his breast. His feet were also bound in a chain known as the Dārukā and the rim of a broken pot was made to hang round his neck. His matted hair was again tied by a rope by means of which he was suspended from the roof of the cell. The smoke issuing from the burning husk below nearly suffocated the prince Lausen. Besides two sets of sharp razors were arranged on the two sides of the prisoner so as to cut his person at the slightest movement.”

<sup>1</sup> লাউসেনে বন্দীশালে নিল পোতা মাজী ।  
 পাত্র বলে বেটাকে দিলাম ভাল মাজী ॥  
 হাতে হাতকড়ি দিল গলায় শিকল ।  
 বুকে তুল্যা দিলেক পাথর জগদল ॥  
 ডাডুকা দিলেক পায় যেন দশ মণ ।  
 গলায় দিলেক হাড়ী সংশয় জীবন ॥  
 জটে দড়ি দিয়া টাঙ্গে চালের বাতায় ।  
 উমা মুরি খাল্য যেন তুষের ধুলায় ॥  
 খরশান ক্ষুর সব রাখে ছুই পাশে ।  
 লড়িতে চড়িতে মাংস কাটে অনারাসে ॥

—নরসিংহ বসুর ধর্মরাজের গীত ।

<sup>1</sup> The building of a prison-house with sharp razors fitted on to the walls, is curious indeed.

This system of punishment bears strange resemblance to that obtaining in Europe, especially in England, during the reign of Stephen. The use of a pot round the neck of a criminal, as described above, reminds one of the system of pillory as existed in Europe and the use of a heavy stone was perhaps peculiar to this country.

Every Hindu capital contained an execution-ground or 'Mashān' as it was called, a type of which existed in Cooch Behar till the other day. A temple of Kālī always formed a part of the execution place. A metal-pointed bamboo-pole known as the 'Śūl,' was kept there for impalement. In Bhāratchandra's Vidyāsundar and in Dharma-songs are to be found descriptions of an execution-ground.

Ordinary houses may be divided into two classes, namely, those belonging to the rich and those belonging to the poor. The description of a rich man's house given by Mālādhār Vasu, as mentioned previously, helps us to form an idea of the same.

The following parts of a residential house attract our notice :—

- |       |                |     |     |  |
|-------|----------------|-----|-----|--|
| (i)   | চাল            | ... | ... | Roof.                                    |
| (ii)  | কনকধারা (ঝারা) | ... | ... | A golden vase set at the top of a house. |
| (iii) | ঝাণ্ডা         | ... | ... | Flagstaff.                               |
| (iv)  | বেড়া          | ... | ... | Walls.                                   |
| (v)   | খুঁটি          | ... | ... | Poles or posts.                          |

The following were the parts of a curvilinear roof made of bamboos, reeds and other materials :—

- |     |      |     |     |  |
|-----|------|-----|-----|--|
| (i) | সারক | ... | ... | Bamboo-poles placed horizontally over the frame-work. <sup>1</sup> |
|-----|------|-----|-----|--|

<sup>1</sup> See Chaṇḍikāvya by Kamala Lochan.



- (ii) রুয়া ... ... Split bamboo placed in close array across the 'Sāraks' of a roof.
- (iii) টুয়া ... ... The top of a curvilinear roof.
- (iv) পাইর ... ... The bamboo pieces joining the frame-work of posts supporting the roof.
- (v) পাতি ... ... Bamboo pieces or metallic sheets to protect the angles of the four walls.<sup>1</sup>

Houses whether belonging to the rich or to the poor, were generally made of thatch and bamboo. The quality of a house used to be judged by the workmanship displayed and not by the materials used. The use of canes for building purposes was remarkable. In many cases canes were coloured and artistically formed into pictorial representations. These are to be seen even to this day in East Bengal where mud-walls are scarcely to be found. In the *Chandikāvya* by Kavikāṅkaṇ we find the roof of the vessel of merchant Śrīmanta, Dhanapati's son, built artistically with canes. In the Mymensingh ballads we find animated descriptions of houses exhibiting all the workmanship and peculiarities of house-building (not excepting the cane-work). The use of peacock feathers for adorning a house as described in the *Dwija Abhirām's Mahābhārat* and in the Mymensingh Ballads<sup>2</sup> seems novel.

<sup>1</sup> See *Manasāmaṅgal* by Vijay Gupta. The terms are still in use in East Bengal, specially in the District of Mymensingh.

<sup>2</sup> See the story of Maluā and other stories of the Mymensingh Ballads (Bengali Version, pp. 7, 8, 15, 18, 19, 27, 62, 114 and 221, ed. by D. C. Sen) for an elaborate description of Bengali houses of old.

The doorways<sup>1</sup> (*Bāra-Duāri*, *lit.* containing twelve doors) as mentioned in these ballads is indeed peculiar. A room possessing no less than twelve doors is not to be found now-a-days. The roofs of a big house were composed, as they are composed now, of four or eight frames. The houses were divided into a number of apartments. The house of a rich man would usually consist of five apartments.

It is not true, as stated before, that the Bengalis did not use stone as building material.<sup>2</sup> Stone pillars have recently been unearthed from various places of Bengal, shewing admirable architectural workmanship. But stone was used as building-material only by the rich, the Rājās and Rāj-chakravartis of old. Ordinarily the people of Bengal, specially of Eastern Bengal where the rivers are so treacherous, used to construct straw-built houses and the whole art of the Bengali architects was employed in beautifying the roofs and walls with workmanship of high aesthetic order, using fine canes, wrought into designs of a great variety.

If it is true that other parts of the world imitated the style of curvilinear roofing from Bengal,<sup>3</sup> as stated by Fergusson, then surely this Bengali style has been adopted by the Dravidian people in Southern India as we find in the stone-built 'Raths.' Thus writes Fergusson :—

<sup>1</sup> Cf. The *Bāra-Duāri* (a pucca building with twelve doors) of Niamtullāh of Gauḍ. See the following lines in *Gauḍer Itihās* by R. Chakravartī, Vol. II, p. 16 :

“নিয়মতউল্লার বারহুয়ারী চতুষ্কোণ দালান । এই দালানে বারটি দরজা আছে ।  
ইহা প্রত্যেক দিকে ৪২ ফুট প্রশস্ত । মধ্য প্রকোষ্ঠ ২১½ ফুট বর্গ । চারিখান প্রস্তর-  
ফলকে কোরানের বচন উৎকীর্ণ আছে ।”

<sup>2</sup> That the Bengalis did actually possess such buildings has been admitted by Fergusson in a passing way in his work, *Ancient and Eastern Architecture*, as referred to previously.

<sup>3</sup> A brick-built house with curvilinear roofing still exists at Madhupur in the District of Mymensingh.

“.....The oldest and most interesting group of these monuments are the so-called five ‘Raths’ or monolithic temples standing on the sea-shore to the south of the other rock excavations. One of these, having an apsidal termination, appear in the centre of the preceding woodcut (No. 185) and little detached from the rest. The other four standing in a line running from north-east to south-west looked as if they had been curved out of a single stone or rock, which originally, if that were so, must have been between 35 ft. and 40 ft. high at its southern end, sinking to half that height at its northern extremity and its width diminishing in like proportion. The first on the north is the Draupadī’s Rath—a mere pancala or cell 11 ft. square externally, and with a curvilinear roof rising to about 18 ft. high (Woodcut No. 186). Apparently it was once crowned by a finial of some sort, but its form cannot now be ascertained. This Rath is the most completely finished of the five and is now unique of its kind but must have belonged to an extensive class of buildings when it was executed, and their form consequently becoming important in the history of the style. The cell inside measured 6 ft. 6 in. depth by 4 ft. 6 in. across, on the back wall of which is a four-armed śakti or female divinity, probably Lakṣmī, with some attendants: the Dwārapālas also are females, as are the figures on the north, east and south sides.”<sup>1</sup> There are also other Raths such as those of Arjuna, Bhima and others.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, by Fergusson, pp. 329-31.

<sup>2</sup> See also among other works Cave Temples of India (Fergusson and Burgess), p. 116, and Bengali Temples and their General Characteristics, J.A.S.B. 1909, p. 147. See also an article “বঙ্গীয় স্থাপত্যের ধারা” by Nanigopal Mazumdar, read in the eighth sitting of Baṅgiya-Sāhitya-Sammilan at Burdwan, 1321 (B.S.). See also Rāmāyaṇa by Kṛtīvāsa, Uttarakāṇḍa, p. 11 (Sāhitya Pariṣad edition).

A few words more from Fergusson may not be out of place here. In course of his remarks on the Bengali architecture, he says :—

“ The city of Gaud was a famous capital of the Hindus long before it was taken possession of by the Mahomedans. The Sen and the Pala dynasties of Bengal seem to have resided here, and no doubt adorned it with temples and edifices worthy of their fame and wealth. These, however, were probably principally in brick, though adorned with pillars and details in what used to be called black marble but seems to be an indurated pot-stone of very fine grain, and which takes a beautiful polish. Many fragments of Hindu art in this material are found among the ruins ; and if carefully examined might enable us to restore the style. Its interest, however, principally lies in the influence it had on the Mahomedan style that succeeded it. It is neither like that of Delhi, nor Jaunpur, nor any other style, but one purely local, and not without considerable merit in itself ; its principal characteristic being heavy short pillars of stone supporting pointed arches and vaults in brick—whereas at Jaunpur, for instance, light pillars carried horizontal architraves and flat ceilings. The general character of the style will be seen in the example from a mosque, called Qadam-i-Rasul at the south-east gate of the fort at Gaud, and is by no means devoid of architectural spirit. Bada Sonā Masjid, outside the fort to the north-east, is perhaps the finest memorial now left at Gaud. Built by Nasarat Shah in 1526, it is 168 feet in length by 76 feet outside, with walls 8 feet thick and faced inside and out with hornblende. It has eleven arched entrances in front, each 5 feet 11 inches wide, and 14 feet high. These enter the front corridor, the arches of which support the eleven domes of the roof. Beyond this is the masjid proper, of which the roof has

all fallen ; it had three longitudinal aisles supported by twenty pillars ; and there were eleven mihrabs in the wall. At both sides of the doorways at the end of the corridor, and at the back corners were polygonal minarets of brown basalt, six in all, but their heads are now ruined. From its massive solidity and size this is an imposing building ; indeed this characteristic of the Gaud architecture forms a striking contrast to the lighter arcades of much of the Saracenic style....One of the most interesting of the antiquities of the place is a minar standing just outside the fort to the east. For two-thirds of the height it is a polygon of twelve sides ; above that circular till it attains the height of 84 ft. The door is at some distance from the ground, and altogether, it looks more like an Irish round-tower than any other example known, though it is most improbable that there should be any connection between the two forms...It is perhaps a pillar of victory a *jay-stambha*, such as the Kutb-Minar at Delhi.”<sup>1</sup>

Several types of peculiar houses, mentioned in the old Bengali literature, are noticed below :—

#### *Garden-house.*

The prevailing custom of building a garden-house with separate areas reserved for fruit trees, flower-plants and medicinal herbs is found in the *Manasāmaṅgal* poems by Baṇśīdās.<sup>2</sup> From his description we find that the garden-house used to be constructed in the northern side of the area, allotted for the residential purposes. Tanks were dug and cocoanut trees were planted around it. Among other kinds of fencing, we find mention of the use of

See History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, by Fergusson, pp. 253-259.

See the *Manasāmaṅgal* poems by Baṇśīdās, pp. 212-213.

‘Māndār’—a kind of prickly plants. Growing of banana plants, as described in the poem, is a practice prevalent in the country-side down to the present times.

The description of a steel-house and an elaborate account of its construction as found in the *Manasāmaṅgal* poems deserve some notice. It is described thus :—

“Chānd called in fourteen hundred workmen to his presence to build a steel-house. The architect who was chief of them—was Tārāpati. He was a man of versatile genius and possessed large hands and long rough hair. He had in his right hand a hammer and in his left hand a balance. His hair was yellow and his waist was bent. His nose, eyes and the whole face were black as soot. The house to be built was made of steel and should possess only one door.....Meditating the name of Viśwakarmā, the architects built at the outset a number of workshops. The ‘gābars’ and the ‘pāiks’ were engaged in thousands to carry coal in sacks from the store-house to the workshop. Pig-iron in large quantity, was collected in piles resembling so many hillocks. Then the iron was put into the fire. When it became red-hot by constantly blowing the forge, it was moulded as desired by means of repeated hammering from the sinewy hands. There was great din and bustle in the workshops. Some fashioned plinth, some iron posts, some doors and some bolts. The expert architect, Tārāpati, managed his work very creditably and made the measurement of the steel-house which was nine yards in length and seven yards in breadth. Then he fixed the posts on earth and began the roof-work by standing on these posts. After finishing the structure of the roof he took in hand the ‘ruās’ which he fixed on it, and then completed the top of the roof which he built very strongly. Then Tārāpati descended from the roof and attached the four steel walls on the four sides of the house.

The architect kept only one door at one side. It was made also so carefully that even there, there was scarcely any room left, when closed, for free ventilation.”<sup>1</sup>

The construction of a steel-house as described here bears some resemblance to the corrugated iron sheds of to-day. It cannot be said with certainty if these steel-houses were really corrugated iron-houses.

( চাঁদ সদাগরের গুয়া-বাড়ী নির্মাণ )

লোহার বাসর নির্মাণ

বিপরীত কৰ্ম করিতে চাঁদ ভাল জানে !

চৌদ্দ শত কৰ্মকার ডাক দিয়া আনে ।

তারাপতি কৰ্মকার সকলের প্রধান ।

অধিক গুণ তাহার জানে সৰ্বকাম ॥

দীর্ঘ দীর্ঘ হাত পা মাথায় ঝাটা চুল ।

ডান হাতে হাতুর বাম হাতেতে তুল ॥

পিঙ্গল মাথার চুল বেকা কাকালি ।

নাকে মুখে চক্ষুতে লাগিয়াছে কালী ॥

\* \* \* \*

সুন্দর লোহার ঘর তাহে ঘাট পাট ।

একভিতে দ্বার খুইয়া লাগায় কপাট ॥

কুলুপ কপাট চাপিয়া এক ভায় ।

বায়ু না সঞ্চারে যেন পিপীড়া না যায় ॥

\* \* \* \*

আবাসের বাহিরে আছে ঠাণ্ডা স্বতস্তুর ।

সেইখানে গড় গিয়া লোহার বাসর ॥

\* \* \* \*

সকল কামার মিলি করিলেক ধ্যান ।

বিশ্বকর্মা অগ্নি সত্তে পাতিল দোকান ॥

The outlandish appearance of Tārāpati together with the superiority of the workmanship claimed by the architect, leads me to suppose that he might have been a stranger. The description of iron-melting and mouldering in workshops shows on what stupendous a scale these were carried on and how skilful the workmen were, unlike the blacksmiths of the present day.

গাবর পাইক লইয়া জায় হাজার হাজার ।  
 ভাণ্ডার হইতে লোহা নেয় গোলার অঙ্গার ॥  
 বিদায় লইয়া কস্মকর চলে আথে বাথে ।  
 ঘরের স্থানে ভাও গিয়া করে ভাল মতে ॥  
 সকল পাইক লইয়া একত্র করিল মেলা ।  
 ভাণ্ডার হইতে আসে লোহা অঙ্গারের ছালা ॥  
 পৰ্কত প্রমাণ লোহা খুইল রাশি রাশি ।  
 দোকানের অগ্নি দেখি বড় ভয় বাসি ॥  
 কেহ লোহা পোড়া দেয় কেহ তার হাতি ।  
 আগুনে পুড়িয়া লোহা করিলেক পাঁতি ॥  
 অগ্নি হেন জলে লোহা দেখি লাগে ভয় ।  
 প্রভাত কালেতে যেন সূর্য্যের উদয় ॥  
 অতি তপ্ত হৈল লোহা অগ্নির সমান ।  
 দোহাতিয়া বাড়ী দিয়া করে খান খান ॥  
 লোহা তাঁতাইয়া কামারগণ করে গুণগোল ।  
 কেহ বলে তাঁতা কেহ বলে তোল ॥  
 একেবারে কামারগণ করে হুড়াহুড়ি ।  
 কামারের বোল চাল হাতুরের বাড়ী ॥  
 অতি শীঘ্র অগ্নি জলে গায়ে পড়ে ঘাম ।  
 কেহ গড়ে লোহার ভিট কেহ গড়ে খাম ॥  
 হাজারে হাজারে কামার করে কিলকিল ।  
 কেহ গড়ে কপাট কেহ গড়ে খিল ॥



*Tangi-ghar.*

The 'Tangi-ghar' or the tower-house was a very peculiar kind of house, built in a lake. A house akin to a 'Tangi-ghar' may yet be seen still existing in a lake at Chhindwara, a district-town in the Central Provinces. We learn from the Mahābhārata that Duryodhana hid himself in a lake which means perhaps that he took shelter in such a house. In Gorakṣavijay is found mention of

তারাপাতি কৰ্ম্মকার চাতুরী ভাল জানে ।  
 বাছিয়া বাছিয়া কামার লইল জনে জনে ॥  
 বিশ্বকৰ্ম্মা স্মরিয়া স্মরিল দেবী আই ।  
 বিটার বেকা ভাঙ্গিয়া যুথিল ঠাঞি ঠাঞি ॥  
 আড়ে সাত গজ নয় গজ দীর্ঘে ।  
 প্রমাণ করিল ঘর নয় গজ উভে ॥  
 ঝাটিতে সারিয়া কামার করে ত্বরা ।  
 খুটির উপর চড়িয়া ঘর করে সারা ॥  
 চাল গড়ি তারাপতি হাতে লৈল রুয়া ।  
 কসিয়া বান্ধিয়া দড় করে টুয়া ॥  
 ঘর বান্ধিয়া কামার নামিল ভূমিত ।  
 চারিখানা লোহার বেড়া দিল চারি ভিত ॥  
 আগাগোড়া ঘোড়াইয়া বাসরে দিল ভাও ।  
 পিপীড়ার সঞ্চার নাই না সঞ্চারে বাও ॥  
 চাঁদর কার্য্যে কৰ্ম্মকারের মনে আশা অতি ।  
 কোণে কোণে মিলাইয়া দিল লোহার পাতি ॥  
 ঘর নিৰ্ম্মাইয়া তারা ঘরে গেল ঝাট ।  
 একভিতে দ্বার খুইয়া লাগাল কপাট ॥  
 বাহির দিয়া তবে সৰ্ব্বলোকে চাই ।  
 থাকুক অস্ত্রের কাম বায়ু গতি নাই ॥

—বিজয় গুপ্তের মনসামঙ্গল ।

a tower-house, which was the abode of Hara, the great god and Gaurī, his divine consort.<sup>1</sup> A kind of house quite different in construction but similar in name is still known as the *Tong* (tower-house). The *Tong* is still built by the Gāros and other aboriginal tribes in the jungly tracts and hills of Assam and Bengal at a considerable height. The house rests on the tops of stout wooden posts. A ladder is kept to facilitate ascent and descent. Similar houses were built in different parts of India by the villagers for protection against raids by the marauding hordes of the Mahrāttās and Pindāris.<sup>2</sup> These were partly used as watch-towers.

The dwellings of the poor were generally composed of thatched houses. The walls were either mattings or of mud. The mats were chiefly made of bamboo. The poor sometimes could not afford a better wood than that of the Castor-oil plant. The description of a poverty-stricken house is found in *Kavikañkaṇ*. Thus we find,

“Fullarā sat by the side of the goddess Chaṇḍī (in incognito) and related her sorrows of poverty. The hut had the shed of palm-leaves and posts of Castor-oil plant which break down at each gust of wind in the first part of Summer (mid-April to mid-May).”<sup>3</sup>

The house of the poor sometimes contained cavities on the ‘Kutchā’ floor which served the purpose of cups.

<sup>1</sup> See *Gorakṣavijay*, *Minchetan* and *Kavikañkaṇ Chaṇḍī*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Also similar houses in Hill Stations of A. B. Ry., E. B. Ry., and Govt. Forest offices in India.

<sup>3</sup> বসিয়া চণ্ডীর পাশে কহে দুঃখ-বাণী ।  
ভাঙ্গা কুড়ে ঘর তাল পাতার ছাউনি ॥  
ভেরেণ্ডার খুঁটি তার আছে মধ্য ঘরে ।  
প্রথম বৈশাখ মাসে নিত্য ভাঙ্গে ঝড়ে ॥

Thus we find in Kavikaṇkaṇ, the fowler-woman Fullarā saying in distress :—

“ You will be sorry to hear of our sad plight: We take ‘Āmāni’ (a kind of acid soup) from these cavities on the floor, for want of cups.”<sup>1</sup>

The method of house-building has been very graphically described in the aphorisms of Khanā. Thus we gather from them that a house should be built in such a way that there may be a tank on the east side, an orchard or garden on the north, bamboo-groves (essential for house-construction) on the west and an open space on the south.<sup>2</sup> Such a fashion of house-building obviously grew out of sanitary considerations.

This rule has always been observed from time immemorial by the rich and the poor alike. The climatic peculiarities of a tropical country like Bengal necessitate the admission of ample air and light in each room and accordingly separate houses were built around a courtyard. Usually there are more apartments than one in a residence. The outer apartment of a man living in the country and possessing land invariably contains haystacks and cowsheds. The inner apartment always possesses a vegetable-yard and a place to husk paddy.

দুঃখ কর অবধান, দুঃখ কর অবধান ।

আমানি খাবার গর্ত দেখে বিগ্ৰহমান ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য ।

পূর্বে হাঁস । পশ্চিমে বাঁশ ॥

উত্তরে বাগ । দক্ষিণে ফাঁক ॥

—খনার বচন ।

## CHAPTER XI.

### RELIGION.

#### *I. Evidence of the Great Ethical Virtues in the Dharma Cult.*

A century or so before the advent of Islam in Bengal Buddhism had deteriorated into the Dharma cult, which as represented in the *Śūnya Purāṇ*, shows some of the essential features of the Mahāyāna creed shrouded in popular superstitions. In fact, in all the vernacular poems and folk-tales composed before the Brahmanic revival, stress has been laid on *acts*, and not on *devotion*, the characteristic of the latter-day Brahmanic School of faith. 'As you sow, so you reap,' with its corresponding emphasis upon action, was the doctrine that obtained among the Mahāyāna Buddhists of the day. This canon of work provides no place for the intervention of divine mercy, leaving as it does, every human being to work out his own salvation. The early Bengali poems, prior to Brahmanic revival, record glorious examples of moral power, of abstinence and other sterner virtues of the soul, as opposed to the emotional felicities, extolled in the latter-day vernacular work.

In the folk-lore of Bengal, we come across numerous incidents, which serve to glorify human power. Let us, for instance, take the story of Mālāñchamālā. Mālāñchamālā uncomplainingly suffers all sorts of miseries sustained by her faith in the efficacy of her own actions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See D. R. Mazumdār's 'Thākur-mār Jhuli.'

Loyalty, hospitality, respect for pledges, truthfulness, abstinence and charity were the virtues which, in those days, carried favour with the people of Bengal, and devotional fervour—the characteristic of the Renaissance period—is scarcely noticeable in our earlier literature in an explicit form. Lāu Sen, Kālu Dom, Rañjāvatī, Lakṣmī, Harihar Bāity and others are described in the Dharmamaṅgal poems to have performed heroic deeds, actuated by the spirit of renunciation and inspired by great ethical virtues. Here again, stress has been laid upon action, as opposed to devotion. Underlying the mythological fable of Lāu Sen's making the sun rise in the West, there is fundamental doctrine of the Buddhist religion, *viz.*, that nothing is impossible for a resolute will to achieve. The following example from Māṇik Gaṅguli's Dharmamaṅgal poems lends support to this belief.<sup>1</sup>

“We read in the Purāṇas about the great old sages Vālmiki, Vṛgu, Vyāsa, Parāśara, Pulastya and others passing through great austerities. The sages could not make the sun rise in the West,—a miracle, performed by Lāu Sen.”

It was believed that all the powers (including that of working miracles), attributed to the gods and Brāhmanas by the later Brāhmanic school, could be achieved by any and every individual, to whatever caste he might belong, if only he passed through certain religious austerities the

<sup>1</sup> বান্দীকি বশিষ্ঠ ভৃগু ব্যাস আদি মুনি ।

পরশর পুলস্ত্য পুরাণে নাম শুনি ॥

কঠোর তপস্তা করে জরাজীর্ণ দেহ ।

পশ্চিমে উদয় দিতে পারে নাই কেহ ॥

লাউ সেন পশ্চিমে উদয় দিয়া এল ।

—মাণিক গাঙ্গুলীর ধর্মমঙ্গল ।

‘Tapasyā’ and this was the belief that found expression in this legend of the sun rising in the West.

Harihar Bāity, a poor man, as we read in the Dharma-maṅgal poems, sacrificed his life for speaking the truth. When he gave evidence, before the emperor, about “the sun-rise in the West,” of which, he said, he was an eye-witness, he knew it perfectly well that he was thereby incurring the displeasure of the minister, who would not believe in the truth of his assertion and might inflict on him any punishment that would please his capricious nature.

But Harihar would never deviate from a path believed by him to be the right one. He frankly admitted before the king of Gauda that Lāu Sen had sacrificed his life to make the sun rise in the West, by virtue of a boon granted to him by the god Dharma after the former had gone through a severe course of austerities for three days, and the sun was actually made to rise in the West, though only for twelve ‘*daṇḍas*’ (nearly five hours).<sup>1</sup> And the price he had to pay for his love of truth and supreme fearlessness of consequences was indeed a dear one; it cost him his life. The villainous minister had him arrested soon after, on a false charge of theft and the fatuous king was made to pass on him the sentence of death by impalement.<sup>2</sup>

Illustrations of such moral heroism can be cited in profusion from the literature of this period; but they are

<sup>1</sup> তিন দিন ছিল রায় হয়ে নব খণ্ড ।

তবে হৈল পশ্চিমে উদয় বার দণ্ড ॥

—বনরামের ধর্মমঞ্জল ।

<sup>2</sup> অবিচারে মহারাজ দিতে বলে শূলি ।

—বনরামের ধর্মমঞ্জল ।

hardly to be found in the literature of the Renaissance. The account of Lāu Sen's great abstinence and sexual purity gives us a glimpse into the spirit of this age.

When Nayānī, wife of Śiva Bārui, approached Lāu Sen with her overtures of love, he proved too strong for her tempting solicitations. He said,<sup>1</sup> "What shall I do with betels, cool sandal-paste and other articles of luxury that you are offering me? I am an ascetic and hence I do not wish to enter the home of a worldly man for shelter. I have been practising austerities, from my boyhood in the name of the god 'Dharma.' On this Friday, I fast in his name. I shall break the fast on Saturday and then take my spare meal. A devotee of the god 'Dharma,' that I am, I do not care for worldly pleasures. Among us, the Vaiśyas, it is not the custom to take meat or fish. I have never used oil to anoint my body. At night, we two brothers, do not rest our heads beneath the roofs of any house ; we sleep under the Kadamba-tree."

কি করিব পান গুয়া শীতল চন্দন ।  
 গৃহস্থের বাড়ী আমি না যাই কখন ॥  
 শিশুকাল হৈতে আমি ধর্মের তপস্বী ।  
 শুক্রবার দিন যোর ধর্ম একাদশী ॥  
 শনিবারে পারনাতে ভক্ষ্য ভোজ্য থাই ।  
 ধর্মের সেবক হৈয়্যা স্তব্ধ নাহি চাই ॥  
 বৈশ্বাসের কূলে নাই আমি স্ত্রী ভোজন ।  
 ধর্ম বিনা অধর্ম আমি না করি কখন ॥  
 আপনার জনমে কভু তৈল নাহি মাখি ।  
 নিশি-যোগে দুই ভাই কদম-তলে থাকি ॥

\* \* \* \*

প্রবাসে কদম-তলা রতন মন্দির ।

—রূপরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল ।

Though the worship of Dharma, no doubt, implies a spirit of devotion, it is not purely spiritual in the sense in which the Renaissance has taken it. The devotion of the followers of the Dharma-cult consists in self-sacrifice, abstinence and other virtues, and not in the mere recitation of the names of the Deity, which has been urged, inculcated and emphasised by the Brahmanic Revivalists, as possessing wonderful efficacy in hastening the spiritual advancement of the people. •

Loyalty, especially that of a soldier, to the cause that he fights for, was considered to be one of the most important virtues,—characteristic of this period.

In the Dharma-maṅgal poems we find a fairly accurate picture of an ideal Hindu soldier. He is ever ready to sacrifice his life in the service of the king. Although he is not a moral propagandist still he will seldom speak an untruth or deviate from the path of virtue, for he believes, with all the intensity of a true believer, that if he fails in his duty, his failings would affect the king adversely. When Kālu was on the point of sacrificing his life, only to keep the word he had pledged to his brother Kāmbā, he said,<sup>1</sup> “ You wicked man, you have put on the mask of a saint very successfully. You are a contemptible

¹ কালু বলে চণ্ডালে ধার্মিক বড় তুঁ ।  
 দেখিতে উচিত নয় তো ঝাড়ির সু ॥  
 কি করিব কোথা হতে পরকাল মজে ।  
 এ পাপে পরশে পাছে সেন মহারাজে ॥  
 এ পাপে না হয় পাছে পশ্চিমে উদয় ।  
 সেনের কর্তার সেবা পাছে ব্যর্থ হয় ॥  
 সত্য না লজ্জিহু আমি ইহার কারণ ।  
 অতএব অধম তোর বাঁচিল জীবন ॥

—ঘনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল ।



creature and I hate you with all my heart. My first impulse was to kill you on the spot, but I refrain from doing so, as I am resolved to keep my promise. If I prove false I shall not be the only sufferer for it in the world to come, but my master Lāu Sen, too, will, to a certain extent, incur the demerit of my transgression. This, indeed, is a matter of far greater concern to me. If I fail in my duty, the austerities of Lāu Sen will be of no avail, and the sun will never rise in the west.”<sup>1</sup>

The following has been taken from the account of Kālu's death, given in Ghanarām's poems.

“Kālu tied his wife Lakhā tightly (so that she might not obstruct him in his self-destruction). He then turned to the east and made a promise to his brother Kāmbā that he would accede to his wishes. It was done very solemnly in the name of Dharma, by touching the holy water of the Ganges and Tulasī leaf.”<sup>2</sup> True to his promise, he then offered himself to be beheaded by his brother, in spite of his wife's intercession ; and the relentless brother did not recoil from his projected fratricidal task.

<sup>1</sup> Kāmbā, the wicked brother, has extorted a promise from Kālu, in a moment when the latter was affectionately disposed towards him, to this effect that he would give Kāmbā whatever he might seek from him. Kāmbā, who was all the while intriguing with the minister of Gauḍ to devise ways and means for killing Kālu, demanded the latter's head in fulfilment of his promise. Kālu, now fully convinced of his brother's wicked machinations, offered his head in fulfilment of the pledge he had once given, though in an unguarded moment.

<sup>2</sup> লখেকে বান্ধিয়া দড় কালু সত্য করে ।

গঙ্গাজলে তুলসী তাহার তুলে ধরে ॥

পূর্বমুখে বলে কালু এই ব্রহ্মসত্য ।

যে কিছু মাগিবি কাবা তাই দিব তথ্য ॥

“Lakhā, when she saw her husband killed, in her presence, instantly took her seat on an elephant and attacked her husband’s assailant with great fury. She hurled a battleaxe against Kāmbā, which killed the villain at once, and recovered the dead body of her husband with the severed head.”<sup>1</sup>

This act of the widowed wife of Kālu testifies to the spirit of the age.

Hospitality was considered to be one of the highest of human virtues. The duties of a host were held to be sacred and any violation of them was thought to be sacrilegious.

The host would do anything to propitiate his guest. Even the sacrifice of his life was not too dear a price to purchase the satisfaction of his guest. In fact, the spirit of the dictum *সর্বদেবময়োহতিথিঃ* was overestimated in this period of our history. The story of Karna’s killing his own son, Br̥saketu, to win the satisfaction of his Brahman-guest may have originated in the very age which was characterised by a distinct and dominant spirit of renunciation and self-sacrifice. In this fable, the idea of charity and other hospitable virtues has been strained too far. The thrilling story of the execution of Prince Luichandra of the Buddhistic age bears a striking similarity to this legend. Here is an extract from the account of Luichandra’s death :—

সত্ত্বর কুঞ্জর পীঠে উঠে করে ভর ।

দেখে পরাক্রম লখে বলে ধর ধর ।

মেলা টাঙ্গি ফেলায়ে কাষার হানে শির ।

মাথার সহিত নিল স্বামীর শরীর ॥

—স্বনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল ।

“ ‘I do not require any other meat,’ said the Sannyāsī, ‘save that of a human being.’ He also said, ‘You will be very sorry to hear that I want to eat the flesh of your son Luichandra. O Madanā, see that you do not weep when you dress and cook the meat of your own elder son. I will eat the curry, thus prepared, with great relish.’ This hideous request shocked the parents of the prince ; it stunned them for a moment. The King, however, did not shrink back. In a moment he made up his mind and took a sharp-edged sword in his hand and killed his beloved lad before the image of the god Dharma.”

Then, again, stories are not wanting in our old literature, in which God Himself is described as coming down to the earth in the guise of a human being to test the spirit of hospitality among men. The excesses in which the imagination of the people delighted to revel, in connection with the above virtue, were responsible for the invention of these stories, intended evidently to celebrate the triumph of

১ সন্ন্যাসী বলেন বুধা মাংস নাহি চাই ।

খাই যে মনের মত মহামাংস পাই ॥

\* \* \* \*

সন্ন্যাসী বলেন শুনে হইবে কাতর ॥

পাছে পুত্র ভোজনে মদনা মিছে কান্দ ।

বড় ব্যাটা লুইশচন্দ্র কেটে কুটে রান্ন ॥

সেই মাংস ভোজন করিব আমি সুখে ।

বোল শুনি শেল বাজে মা বাপের বুকে ॥

—ঘনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল, পৃ: ৩৪ ।

২ সাধুর সাহস শুনি খড়্গ নিল হাতে ।

পুত্রে বলি দেন রাজা ধর্মের সাক্ষাতে ॥

—ঘনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল, পৃ: ৩৬ ।

the virtue of hospitality. People were so greatly fascinated by exaggerated pictures of this virtue that they failed to condemn such a conception as monstrous and inhuman. Hence it is, that the story of Dātā-Karṇa, narrated in various forms, is to be found in abundance in the pages of old Bengali manuscripts that have been handed down to us.

It will now be evident that virtuous deeds were given a higher place than abstract faith. The distribution of rice<sup>1</sup> to the poor and the excavation of tanks for public use are highly praised in the Dāker Vachan, but very rarely in these aphorisms there is a line calling upon the house-holder to recite the name of God,—a point seldom forgotten in the literature of the Renaissance.

## II. *Theories of Creation.*

The cosmogonical doctrines of the Dharma cult may be traced to a very ancient age—the period of the Vedas. The speculation about the origin of the Universe is based on a text of the R̥gveda running thus :—

“Nor aught, nor naught existed then, not the aerial space nor heaven’s bright roof. Above what covered all ? Where rested all ? Was it water, the profound abyss ?

“Death was not then, nor immortality. There was no difference of day and night. That one breathed breathless of life (*i.e.*, existed but without exerting or manifesting itself) and there was nothing other than it.

“In the beginning there was darkness in darkness unfolded. All was undistinguishable water. That one that

<sup>1</sup> অন্ন বিন্ন নাহি দান ।

ইহার পর ধর্ম নাহি আন ॥

—ডাকের বচন, ধর্মপ্রকরণ ।

lay in the empty space wrapped in nothingness was developed by the powers of heat (or penance).

“Desire first arose in it. That was primaeval germ in mind, which poets reaching with their intellect discovered in their hearts to be the bond between Being and not-Being.

“A ray of light which stretched across these did it come from below or from above? Then seeds were sown and mighty forces arose and nature beneath and power and forces above.

“Who indeed knows? Who proclaimed it here? Whence was the creation produced? The Gods were later than its production. Who knows whence it sprang?

“He from whom this creation sprang whether he made it or not; the all-seer in the highest heaven, he knows it or does not.”<sup>1</sup>—Muir.

The *Sūnya Purāṇ* evidently follows the same theory.

“There was no line, no form, no colour and no sign.  
The sun and the moon were not, nor day, nor night.

The earth was not, nor water, nor sky.

The mounts Meru, Mandara and Kailāsa were not.

The creation was not, nor were there gods, nor men.

Brahmā was not, nor was Viṣṇu, nor the ethereal regions.

Heaven and earth were not; all was emptiness.

The presiding gods of the ten directions were not.

Nor were there the clouds, nor stars.

Life was not, nor death, nor pangs of deaths.

The Lord moved in the void, supporting Himself on the void.” etc.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *R̥gveda*, 10, 129.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Sen's *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, pp. 32-33, and the *Sūnya Purāṇ* by Rāmāi Pandit.

### *III. Common Features in Buddhist and Hindu Tāntrikism and in the Dharma Cult.*

Dr. Kern thus refers to the Tāntrik element in Buddhism : <sup>1</sup>

“ The doctrines of Buddhism in India from the eighth century downwards nearly coincides with the growing influence of Tāntrikism and sorcery which stand to each other in the relation of theory to practice. The development of Tāntrikism is a feature that Buddhism and Hinduism in their later stages have in common. Examples of austerities and mortification of the flesh which the Tāntriks had adopted are found in the literature of the Dharma Cult. The following passage, for example, may be quoted from Ghanarām :

‘ Oh Lord, do please grant me the boon of a son or, else I shall give up my life at the stake,’ said queen Rañjāvatī. She then offered Arghya to the God Dharma before proceeding to carry out her dreadful resolve. And when meditating upon the great God she suddenly dropped down on the floor, sustaining injuries all over her person and began to bleed. It was now believed that she was dead. Those who witnessed the scene were deeply moved and even the God in heaven could not remain unaffected by this tragic occurrence.’ <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Kern's Manual, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> একপুঞ্জ দান মোরে দেহ পরাংপর ।  
নতুবা পরাণ ত্যজি শালে দিয়া ভর ॥  
পুনর্ব্বার অর্থ্য দিয়ে ধ্যায় ধর্ম্মরূপ ।  
রূপ করে ঝাঁপ দিতে শব্দ উঠে রূপ ॥  
বৃকে পিঠে ফুটে শাল পিঠে হল ফার ।  
ঝলকে ঝলকে মুখে উঠে রক্ত ধার ॥

Again the story of Prince Lāusen's austerities may be cited as another example. Says Harihar Bāity,<sup>1</sup> "My duty is to announce the sun-rise by a beat of drums in the southern gate on the bank of the Hākaṇḍa. I saw the sun rising in the west. The miracle performed by prince Lāusen cost him his life, as he cut off his head with his own hands and placed it on a triangular framework of wood. Twelve other devotees and the same number of Āminīs (priestesses) also sacrificed their lives to please the god Dharma."

The feats of miracle exhibited by the Tāntriks were quite a peculiar feature, in this age (from the 8th to 12th century). In 'Māṇikchandra Rājār Gān' we find Maynā-matī<sup>2</sup> described as remaining in fire for seven days and

হাহাকার করে দেখ যত ভক্তগণ ।

দেবতা সবার স্বর্গে টলিল আসন ॥

জীবন ত্যজিল রাণী করে ছট্‌ফট্‌ ।

চাঁপায়ের ঘাটে বড় ঘটিল সঙ্কট ॥

—ঘনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল, পৃ: ৪৩-৪৪ ।

<sup>1</sup> দক্ষিণ দ্বারে আমি দিতাম ধূল ।

পশ্চিমে উদয় হলো হাকপুের কুল ॥

লাউসেন নিয়ম করিল নবখণ্ড ।

ত্রিকাঠা উপরে কেটে দিয়াছিল গুণ্ড ॥

বারজন ভক্ত মৈল দ্বাদশ আমিনী ।

এই সত্য ধর্ম কথা এই আমি জানি ॥

—মাণিক গাঙ্গুলীর ধর্মমঙ্গল, পৃ: ৩২৭-৩২৮

<sup>2</sup> সাত দিন নও রাইত ময়না অনলের ভিতর ।

পুড়িতে পোড়া না যায় পরিধানের কাপড় ॥

—মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান

nights and yet coming out unscathed in the end. Even her garments were not burnt. Kṛttivāsa and Kāśidās, in their earlier recensions of the epics, introduced these elements as they were prevalent in an earlier age and could not possibly exclude them from their version, though they were themselves poets of the Renaissance period. In the Bengali Mahābhārat we find Sudhanwā described to have remained in burning oil for days and nights without being burnt. In the Bengali Rāmāyaṇa, again, we find Rāvana cutting off, one after another, his ten heads to propitiate the goddess Durgā.

The sorceries, played by Mahīrāvan are well-known. Hanumān becomes a fly and whispers his message to the goddess. These do not certainly form a part of the original epic of Vālmiki. These Tāntrik elements are the distinguishing features of the pre-Renaissance literature.

When Tāntrikism took a deep root in the country it was believed that man was superior to gods. However, quite a contrary belief was current in the Paurāṇik period. The idea of salvation through individual efforts was so much emphasised in Tāntrikism that a man's power was considered almost unlimited, provided he could pass through austerities, prescribed in the different Tantras. In Nāthism, which borrowed largely from the Mahāyāna Buddhists, we find gods trembling before men and hastening to execute their commands. Even a woman like Maynāmatī compelled the gods to obey her. "Maynāmatī filliped her fingers (producing a sound *tuḍu, tuḍu*) and all the ascetics appeared before her. Gorakṣanāth who could take any shape he desired, came along in a chariot, known as the Puṣpa-Rath. The sage Nārada came riding his celebrated "Dheñki" (wooden rice-husker) followed by the god Śiva, who came on his favourite bull. The brothers Rām and Lakṣmaṇ reached there with their



bows and arrows and the five Pāṇḍavas followed them. Many other sages also came down to the spot.”<sup>1</sup>

Even death, the dread of all living beings, is said to have been conquered by the Tāntriks; thus we find Maynāmatī defying death on the strength of her mystic knowledge, the ‘Mahā-jñāna.’

Yama, the god of death, fled from his own court at the mere sight of queen Maynā. The disgrace, which the Godā-Yama, a messenger of the king of death, is described to have been subjected to by Maynāmatī, is a wild feat of imagination showing that according to the Dharma cult, one could make one’s personality dreaded even by the most dreaded of gods. In the course of her pursuit of Godā-Yama, the transfiguration (which both of them underwent) was the result of acquisition of that power which is ascribed to Tāntrikism. In the European Folk-literature, too, we meet with similar stories.<sup>2</sup>

“Godā-Yama became bewildered at this, and changed himself into a carp. The queen transformed herself into a water-fowl and began to beat the carp with her wings.

১ তুড়ু তুড়ু করিয়া ময়না হুকার ছাড়িল ।  
 যত মুনিগণকে হুকারে নামাইল ॥  
 পুষ্পরঞ্জে গোরখ বিত্ৰাধর ।  
 ঢেঁকি বাহনে নামিল নারদ মুনিবর ॥  
 বাসোয়ার পিঠিত নামিল ভোলা মহেশ্বর ।  
 ধনুকবাণে নামিলেন শ্রীরাম-লক্ষণ ॥  
 পাঁচ ভাই পাণ্ডব নামিল ঠাক্রি ঠাক্রি ।  
 যত শত মুনি নামিল তার লেখাযোথা নাই ॥

—মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

<sup>2</sup> See Mabinogion, Vol. III, Taliesin, p. 354. See also Sen’s Folk-literature of Bengal, pp. 1-15.

Godā-Yama, thereupon, changed himself into a shrimp, and the queen became a gander and searched out the shrimp from under the water. Godā-Yama next flew up in the air in the shape of a dove, but the queen changed herself into a hawk and pursued the dove.”<sup>1</sup>

“The pursuit is continued for a long time till Godā-Yama metamorphosed himself into a Vaiṣṇava saint and sat, in an assembly of holy mendicants of that order. The queen changing herself into a fly, took her seat on the head of the saint. Here Godā-Yama is caught by Maynāmātī and becomes her captive.”

The Sādhu Gorakṣanāth, conquered death and could make the impossible happen at his will. When

- <sup>1</sup> ঐটে হইতে গোদা-যম দিশাহারা হৈল ।  
 ছেঁ ফলা মৎস্য হইয়া জলত ভাঙ্গিবার লাগিল ॥  
 ওরূপ থুইল ময়না একতর করিয়া ।  
 পান কাউড়ি জানোয়ার হইল মূরত বদলাইয়া ॥  
 পাথার সাটনে নি যায় পিড়িয়া ;  
 মধ্য দরিয়ায় গোদা যমক ধরিল ঠেকাইয়া ॥  
 ঐত গোদা যম আটিয়া বজ্জর ।  
 ঢেকেয়া ফেলাইয়া ময়নাক দিল লহড় ॥  
 ঐটে হৈতে গোদা যম কোন কাম করিল ।  
 গচি মচ্চ হয় কাদাত মিশাইল ॥

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রাজহংস হইয়া কাদা ঝারিতে ঝারিতে গোদা যমক নিষায় পিড়িয়া ।  
 মধ্য দরিয়াত গোদা যমক ধরিল ঠাসিয়া ॥

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ঘরানী কৈতর হইয়া স্বর্গে উড়ে গেল ।  
 শিকিরাবাজ হৈল ময়না মূরত বদলাইয়া ॥  
 আকাশ হইতে গোদা যমক ফেলাইল টানিয়া ॥

—মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

Maynāmatī being forced to ascend her husband's funeral pyre, prayed to Gorakṣanāth for her rescue the latter at once appeared before her and blessed her in the following terms, "Go home, Maynā. You will not be burnt by fire—you will rather feel as cold as in the depth of winter, when you sit on the burning pyre." <sup>1</sup>

When Rājā Govinda Chandra objected to taking a sweeper for his guru, his mother Maynāmatī reproached him thus,<sup>2</sup> "The Hāḍi (Hāḍi Siddhā) does not belong to this country, he comes from East Bengal. He has made the sun and the moon his 'Kuṇḍalas' or ear-rings.

<sup>1</sup> যাও যাও ময়না তোমাক দিহু বর ।

মাঘ মাসিয়া জাড় লাগিবে অনলের ভিতর ॥

—মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

<sup>2</sup> এ দেশিয়া হাড়ি নয় বঙ্গদেশে ঘর ।

চাঁদ সুরষ রাখছ ছই কানের কুণ্ডল ॥

আপনি ইন্দ্ররাজা ঢুলাএ চামর ।

চন্দ্রের পৃষ্ঠে আঁকে বাড়ে কুরুমের পৃষ্ঠে খাএ ।

আপনি মাও লক্ষী রত্নই করি দেএ ॥

ইন্দ্রপুরের পাঁচ কত্তা ছয়াপতি খেলায়

পাতালের নাগকত্তা তামাকু যোগায় ॥

শুভচনী বাড়ে গুয়া হারিণা বসি খাএ ।

যমের বেটা মেঘনা কুমার পাড়খা ঢুলাএ ॥

চান্দ্রের পৃষ্ঠে রাঁধে হাড়ি কুন্দ্রের পৃষ্ঠে খায় ।

সোনার খড়ম পাএ দিয়া দরিয়া বেড়ায় ॥

দরিয়া বেড়াইতে যদি যমের লাগল পাএ ।

চিলাচাঁঙ্গ দিয়া যমক তিনপ'রে কিলাএ ॥

মারিয়া লরিয়া যমক করুণা শিখায় ।

হেন সাধ্য নাই যমের পলাইয়া যায় ॥

—ময়নামতীর গান ।

Indra, the King of gods, waves the 'Chāmar' at his bidding. The Hāḍi cooks his meal in the disc of the moon and serves it on the back of the tortoise which supports the earth (the second incarnation of the god Viṣṇu). Lakṣmi herself cooks food for him. The five nymphs of Indra's heaven play at chess with him and the serpent-girl of the nether regions is ready with *chilams* of tobacco when he desires a smoke. The goddess Subhachanī prepares betels for him and Meghnā Kumār, the son of Yama, fans him. He crosses big rivers with sandals on, and if he ever meets the lord of death, he keeps beating him for hours together when he, the terror of the world, learns how to cry helplessly like a child."

The most degenerated forms of Tāntrikism once held the society in its grip as will be evident from the description of Rājā Govindachandra's boiling his own mother in an oil-vat to test her supernatural powers. Rājā Govindachandra had a very big fire-place constructed and a monstrous vat weighing sixty maunds was placed on it by Khetu. The vat contained oil weighing eighty maunds. *Sāl* wood was used as fuel and the froths that bubbled up on the surface of the oil were repeatedly removed. Thus for seven days and nights the oil was kept constantly boiling. On the seventh day no more froths could be seen.<sup>1</sup>

তোক বলো ভাইয়া খেতু বাক্য মোর ধর ।  
 তাতাইলা পাতাইলা চোকা নেও বল আরোপিয়া ॥  
 তিনটা নারিকেলের ফল তেহিরা খিচিয়া ।  
 ষাইট মণ কড়াই দিল চোকাই চড়াইয়া ॥  
 আশী মণ তৈল দিল কড়াইল চড়াইয়া ।  
 শালকাঠে আগুন দিল শুলকাইয়া ॥

Into this vat the queen was thrown by the order of her son. These miracles and sorceries form the very backbone of popular Tāntrikism which is characterised by extravagant fancy and not less by the most monstrous atrocities.

The Paurāṇik god Śiva held a unique position in Tāntrikism. He was revered by the Tāntrik Buddhists and the Hindus alike and figures in the latter-day Buddhism of Bengal as a deity next only to Buddha in importance. But the Nātha-cult which assimilated some of the essentials of Buddhism, gives a very high place to Śiva. In Gorakṣa-vijaya examples are not rare to prove this. Still, however, the great god trembles in fear at the mention of Maynāmātī on account of the ‘*Mahā-jñāna*’ ‘acquired by her by means of tāntrik practices. He is described as having said to the subjects of King Māṇik-chandra, “Do not divulge my name to Maynāmātī, for if you do so, she will destroy my Kailāsa.”’<sup>1</sup>

It seems that Tāntrikism was so much prevalent in society that however much abstruse the cult may have now become it was more or less understood even by the illiterate country-folk in the 9th and 10th centuries. All the works, dealing with that epoch, are full of references to this cult. The conversation of Siddhā Gorakṣanāth with his Guru Mīnanāth, as found in Gorakṣa-vijaya, illustrates this

উপরের ছাবনী মারিল তুলিয়া ।

সাতদিন পর্য্যন্ত জ্বাল দেয় নিদ্রা করিয়া ॥

এক দিন দুই দিন পঞ্চ দিন হইল ।

সাত দিন অন্তরত ছাবনী উঠাইল ॥

—মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

<sup>1</sup> মোর কথা কন যদি ময়নার বরাবর ।

কৈলাস ভুবন মোর কৈর্যে লগুভগু ॥

point. The language of the passage is simple but the mystic import that it bears is a perfect puzzle to lay men unacquainted with the rudiments of the Yoga practices. I give below (in the foot-note) an extract.<sup>1</sup>

The powers acquired by Tāntrik practices are thus classified by Hemchandra who lived in the 11th-12th century (according to the Viśwakoṣa) and compiled a Jaina version of the Rāmāyaṇa. Rāvaṇa is said to have acquired miraculous powers by 'Tāntrik tapasyā'.

#### IV. *The Growth of the Bhakti Element.*

The gradual decadence of Buddhism and the consequent revival of Hinduism brought about a marked change in the life of our society. Gradually the devotional element began to predominate over the 'Karmavāda' or the principle of

- <sup>1</sup> প্রথমে কহিবা গুরু কায়া পরিচয় ।  
 কায়া কোথা হৈতে পাইলা কাহাতে উদয় ॥  
 দ্বিতীএ কহিবা গুরু এ তনু কারণ ।  
 অজপা কাহারে বলি জপে কোন জন ॥  
 তৃতীয়েতে পঞ্চশব্দী বাজে ঘরীআলী ।  
 কহিয়া দেয়ত মোরে করিয়া আকলী ॥  
 চতুর্থে শ্রীহাটের কহিবা কথন ।  
 কহিবা সকল তত্ত্ব মীন মহাজন ॥  
 পঞ্চমে কহিবা কথা ঘন পার তালী ।  
 কহি দেও এই তত্ত্ব তোমাকে জে বলি ॥  
 ষষ্ঠে কহিয়া দেও প্রভুর বিচার ।  
 কেমন মন্দিরে থাকে কি রূপ তাহার ॥  
 সপ্তমে কহিবা কথা সংসারের সার ।  
 গুরু তুমি কোন জন শিষ্য হও কার ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

—গোরক্ষবিজয়, পৃঃ ১৮৯-১৯৫ ।

action. Devotion or 'Bhakti' which is the essential characteristic of the Renaissance period had gradually began to find favour with the Mahāyāna school<sup>1</sup> during the declining days of Buddhism.

Examples of devotional element in the Paurāṇik Renaissance period are not rare. Thus in the Vaiṣṇava literature we find a canon to the effect that a man can hardly commit sins, however great, during his whole life which cannot be expiated by reciting the name of God only once. The mere recitation of the name of God was considered equivalent to any sort of 'Yoga' or 'tapasyā' in this Kali-yuga. Even in the earliest days of the Śaiva-cult, the element of devotion was a recognised feature.

There are lines in the Śunya Purāṇ by Rāmāi Paṇḍit in which the God Śiva is advised by the devotee to take recourse to agriculture to earn his livelihood. In these lines the devotee appears to be so much influenced by an exuberance of devotion that he forgets his own self and feels a compassionate pain for the sad plight of his Lord in which he imagines him to be.

In this devotional age men believed too much in the efficacy of prayer. The position of the Brāhmaṇs was, however, an exception to this. The Brāhmaṇs claimed equality with the gods, nay, sometimes a superior status. He was called "Bhudeb" or the god on earth for the extraordinary powers he possessed. We read the following in Kāśidās bearing upon the subject :—"It is the Brāhmaṇ whose anger destroyed the clan of the Yadus—it is he whose anger effaced the progeny of King Sagara, it is he whose anger stigmatised the God Moon, it is he whose ire made the sea-water saline, it is he whose wrath made the

<sup>1</sup> As for instance the Dohās of Kāṇhapāda. See Śāstri's "Bauddha-gān o Dohā," pp. 123-132. See also its Introduction, especially pp. 6-8.

fire omnivorous, it is he whose anger made the body of God Indra spotted.' All other castes trembled before the gods and the Brāhmaṇs. In one or two instances, such as the cases of Durbāsā and Bhṛgu, the Brāhmaṇs even dared to declare themselves superior to the gods. Durbāsā cursed Indra for which he lost his sovereignty over heaven for some time and the sage Bhṛgu is said to have kicked the God Viṣṇu on the breast. But these instances are rare. In the Paurāṇik period people did not learn to rely on their own strength but to depend, for everything, on the grace of gods and Brāhmaṇs. This spirit of absolutely slavish dependence naturally weakened the Bengali character. But, as has already been noticed, the mentality of the people belonging to the earlier period, when stress was laid on self-culture and development of ethical virtues, was quite different. The conception of such characters as the merchant Chāṇḍ, Lāusen, and others in the earlier period bears testimony to the stamina of the Bengali character. The bold female characters of the pre-Renaissance age cannot but evoke our admiration. Lakhā had to be tied down by her husband Kālu lest she should prevent him from carrying out his resolve of self-destruction. But in the later age these characters, as recast by the Brāhmaṇs in conformity with the pervading spirit of the Renaissance, suffered the loss of their moral grandeur to a great extent. A heroic character, such as Sītā, whom Vālmīki invests with queen-like grandeur sinks to the level of a common woman at the hands of Kṛttivās and the poets of his school. When Rāma unjustly suspects her, she cries like a helpless weakling and scarcely shows that majestic unconcern which we find in Vālmīki's original.

The male characters underwent even a greater transformation. In the place of Hāḍī Siddhā or Gorakṣanāth



whose powers were even felt by the gods, we see Rām-chandra himself, an incarnation of Viṣṇu, praying to the goddess Durgā like a helpless child in his contests with Rāvaṇa. To a devotee divine help was never refused in times of need.

Thus we find in the *Chañḍikāvya* :—

“Chañḍī descended from her place in heaven into the prison of Kālketu. When the goddess saw the hero in chains, she became quite ashamed of herself. When Kālketu saw the goddess before him, he made a reverential bow with tearful eyes. Then Chañḍī removed the heavy stone from the hero’s breast and also broke the shackles which bound him.”<sup>1</sup>

In the cases of other gods and goddesses we find similar instances of kindly intervention in favour of devoted votaries.

As the ideas of the Paurāṇik age took root in the minds of the people, they became quite helpless in every matter and looked to supernatural agency for relief on every occasion.

Signs, symbols and sorceries held their sway upon popular mind, and self-dependence and manly energy became wellnigh extinct.

But in the Renaissance period, men became accustomed to resignation which is certainly a great spiritual virtue, and the evils of Tāntrikism gradually passed away. The lives of people became more and more regulated by rules of abstinence and other passive virtues. The flowering point of the Renaissance culture was reached in the extraordinary development of Bhakti amongst the Vaiṣṇavas. The age preceding the Brāhmanic revival had no place for the culture of faith, but the influence of Islam was

<sup>1</sup> See Kavikaṅkaṇ’s *Chañḍikāvya*, C.U. Edition, p. 320.

clearly perceptible in the Renaissance cults in the form of a belief in a personal and anthropomorphic God. In the place of an impersonal nature of worship leading men to identify themselves with God (সোহহ্ম), the Renaissance cults distinctly laid a stress on faith in personal gods. In however crude a form this faith was recognised, the followers of Śakti cult believed their deities to watch and guard their devotees, driving their enemies away and protecting them from all dangers with almost the same ardour with which the followers of Islam believed in the intervention of God in their struggles and conflicts with the Kāfers.

## CHAPTER XII.

### EDUCATION.

#### A

During the latter period of the Hindu and the earlier part of Moslem rule the general system of education in Bengal was one which was greatly suitable to the existing conditions of society. Although education had received a great impetus at the hands of the State in the days of Buddhism, as a consequence of which monasteries had become great receptacles of learning, it deteriorated to some extent with the decay of Buddhism and the advent of Paurāṇik Hinduism. However, the Hindu Rājās who undertook to revive the old Vedic rites, became great patrons of Sanskrit learning—henceforth almost exclusively monopolised by the Brāhmins. With the advent of the Moslems, the Buddhistic Universities with their huge libraries became extinct owing to the destructive spirit of the followers of Islam in dealing with all institutions of the Kāfers. The State support being withdrawn, education now depended mainly upon the village communities, rich people and learned men who kept the torch of culture burning as best as they could by their own efforts. The following pages will show the condition of education not only of the Mahomedan period but also of the age prior to it. A considerable period is covered by the subject, though we fail to assign a definite chronological datum in all cases, for the obvious reason of lack of historical materials.

There were, as usual, everywhere, two courses of studies—one Primary and the other Higher. Education supplementing the primary, was somewhat different in its type from that of the present-day system. This kind of education was almost invariably technical and vocational suiting the tastes and capabilities of people of different castes.

The course for elementary education consisted of easy primers. The period of study was perhaps not fixed for this course but together with the secondary or advanced course it would extend normally up to seven years. The elementary course probably covered not more than three years as is the practice now-a-days. The ceremony of Hāte-Khadi ( হাতেখড়ি ) formed an important and interesting part when a boy first entered his student-life.

The following were the writing materials :—

- (1) কুটা—A small piece of straw or reed.
- (2) খড়ি—Chalk.
- (3) ধূলা—Dust or sand.
- (4) কাণ্ড—Thin twig of bamboo.
- (৫) মস্তাধার—Inkpot.
- (6) কলাপাতা—Banana-leaf.
- (7) তালপাতা—Palmyra-leaf.
- (8) ভূর্জপত্র—The bark of Bhūrjja tree.
- (9) তুলট কাগজ—Stained paper dressed with sulphate of arsenic.

The slate, pencil, as well as the black-board were unknown in the primary schools of old Bengal before the advent of the English. In place of a black-board, a student had to write on the floor (of the class-room), strewn

over with sand. The first stage of writing would be completed in this way : a piece of straw would be used as the pen. In Dayārām's 'Sāradā-Maṅgal' we learn the story of a prince who was once put to such a great stress that he had to perform the servile function of supplying sand and straw to students in a school-room. From the nature of his work, fellow-students nick-named him "Dhūlā-Kuṭyā" ( ধূলা-কুটী ), *i.e.*, 'supplier of sand and straw.'<sup>1</sup> Ordinarily, amongst various punishments inflicted for inattention, the above, shewing the great humiliation to which a prince was subjected, will illustrate one of the reformatory systems then in vogue.

Having finished writing with a straw or reed on sand or dust, a student would attempt writing with chalk (খড়ি). With this also one had to write on the floor. In the beginning letters of bigger size would be attempted until the hand would be set in a way fit to write smaller letters.

At this stage banana and palmyra leaves as also 'Bhūrja-Patra' (ভূর্জপত্র) would serve the purpose of paper. On them the pieces of reeds<sup>2</sup> or bamboo-twigs or quills

<sup>1</sup> (i) *Cf.* the condition of a poor student in America at the present day. He will do the work of a common servant in his college and thereby meet the expenses of his studies. President Garfield of America was once one of such students.

(ii) The following shows the spirit of just indignation with which a student looked upon the notorious rod of the pedagogue from which not even a prince was exempted :

পাজি খড়ি খুঁজি পুঁজি, পাপিষ্ঠ বেতের বাড়ি, পাইলে ফেলাই সরোবরে ।

—দয়ারামের সারদামঙ্গল ।

(Fain would I throw into water of the tank, the accursed books, the pens and the teacher's rod.) —(Sāradāmaṅgal by Dayārām).

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* The pen made of the stem of papyrus plant in ancient Egypt. See Breasted's Egypt.

of birds like those of peacocks and geese as are seen even now, would be used as pens to write with. The ink used on the occasion would be made locally with 'Harītakī' (the yellow myrobalan), Bahedā (the belaric myrobalan) and the soot of country-made lamp. This ink would last an incredibly long period—even a few centuries.<sup>1</sup>

On further progress regular paper would be used for writing purposes. This paper would be made locally of cotton by a class of men generally known as the 'Kāgajī' (paper-maker). A folio of this paper made at Bikrampur in the district of Dacca, would be half a cubit in breadth and a cubit and a half in length. The colour was light yellow and the paper would be called 'Tūlat' paper (*lit.* paper made of cotton).<sup>2</sup> Though China is credited with the invention of paper very early, still the claim of Bengal lies in the use of paper, perhaps of her own invention, and unquestionably of her own manufacture. Bengal used from very early days either the paper of her own make or contented herself with the use of leaves which were both durable and suitable for the purpose.

The old 'Puñthis' or manuscripts would consist of either the Palmyra-leaves<sup>3</sup> or 'Tūlat' paper and would be preserved in cases known as the 'Khuṅgis' (খুঙ্গি), which were considered indispensable when the puñthis were to be carried from place to place.

About the course of primary studies it may be said that it consisted generally of a knowledge of the alphabet,

<sup>1</sup> See History of Bikrampur (বিক্রমপুরের ইতিহাস) written in Bengali by Jogendra-nāth Gupta, pp. 330-333.

<sup>2</sup> See the above work.

<sup>3</sup> In the interior of Bengal banana-leaves and palmyra-leaves as well as 'Tūlat' paper are still in use.

*Cf.* The practice in Orissa where palmyra-leaves have been favoured in place of paper from time immemorial.

rudimentary knowledge in spelling, reading and rather a working knowledge of practical Arithmetic. The latter consisted of the tables known as 'Kaḍākiyā' (a table of cowry-reckoning), 'Gaṇḍākiyā' (the table of gaṇḍās ; a method of counting by gaṇḍās or fours), Kāṭhākālī,<sup>1</sup> Bighākālī,<sup>2</sup> etc. With the advent of the Mahomedans in this country, Persian also formed an important part of the curriculum. The institutions for studying Persian were called the Maktabas. The Persian teacher or the Munshi would take up his class in the morning and evening and the Guru would take up his at noon.<sup>3</sup>

A Pāṭhśālā would either have a separate building of its own or would sit in some spacious building attached to a rich man's house or even under a tree if accommodation of that sort would not be available in a village.<sup>4</sup> The indigenous schools provided no chairs, no benches, no stools and no black-boards. A student had to bring his own mat, an inkpot and a pen for his use, while the

<sup>1</sup> Kāṭhā—A measure of land, which is, in lineal measure, 4 cubits or 6 feet, but in square measure 320 sq. cubits or 720 sq. ft. In surveying, ascertaining the area of a plot in kāṭhā is called Kāṭhākālī while the table of kāṭhās is called Kāṭhākiyā.

<sup>2</sup> Bighākālī—In surveying, ascertaining the area of a plot of land in Bighās is called Bighākālī. A bighā is a lineal measure, 80 cubits long or about 40 yds.; also a square measure, 80 cubits square, i.e., about 1,600 square yds. or nearly one-third of an acre.

<sup>3</sup> See Jogendranāth Gupta's *বিক্রমপুরের ইতিহাস*, pp. 330-333.

<sup>4</sup> A pāṭhśālā would sometimes be built at some cost and made artistic in construction. See the *Mahābhārata* by Dvija Abhirām, 'বিচিত্র চৌখণ্ডী শাশুশালা' (The schoolroom was square in size and made very artistic in appearance).

For simplicity of old schools cf. the age of the 'R̥ṣis,' when a 'Bāmāchārīn' was educated in the house of his preceptor.

Though in the ordinary Pāṭhśālās, the boys sat squatting on the floor, yet in higher schools attached to a rich man's mansion, a sort of wooden gallery was raised for students. In the poem of Sakhisona by Fakirām Kavibhūṣaṇ we find that the princess who sat on a higher place in the gallery dropped her pen below which was picked up by the son of the police prefect who sat on a lower bench of the gallery leading to a humorous conversation which latterly led to courtship.

teacher would sit on a footstool, being surrounded by his pupils. The arrangement was suitable to a poor country like India from the economic point of view. Though primary education was not free as is now seen in many countries, still the cost was not at all burdensome. Fees were generally paid in kind. Occasional presentation of kitchen-vegetables to the Guru or helping him in his domestic work or payment in kind (or money) in the religious ceremonies of his house, were considered enough for a student.

In one respect the Pāthśālās of Bengal bore resemblance to those of the sister-institutions of Europe. It was with regard to punishments. The kindergarten system is quite a recent innovation. There was a time in every country, whether Occidental or Oriental, when the teacher would implicitly follow the maxim of “spare the rod and spoil the child” with extreme harshness. Bengal was never an exception to this. Thus we learn the following in the Sārādāmaṅgal of Dayārām :—

“When neither the pupil would learn nor the preceptor could make an impression by softer means, recourse was taken to a free use of the rod, and the Guru was seen waving his cane in the air. Sometimes he would bind a young lad, hand and foot, and at others he would throw his whole weight on the unfortunate victim, sitting down, for a time, on his tender breast. Such punishments were in everyday use, suiting the whims of the pedagogue.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> শিখিতে না পারে তবু শিখাইতে না পারে ।

মারিয়া বেতের বাড়িএ ঠেকা করে ॥

কভু কভু বেঙ্কা রাখে বুকে বস্ত্রে রয় ।

উচিত করয়ে শাস্তি যে দিন যে হয় ॥



The following items of punishment were prominent in old days :—

(1) Caning (for minor offences).

(2) Binding hand and foot.

(3) Binding, and putting the offending lad flat on the floor and then sitting on his breast. This was perhaps done after the well-known practice of putting a stone known as ‘জগদল পাথর’ (*lit.* a stone heavy enough to crush the earth—here heavy) on the breast of a culprit in the prison-house of a king.

Besides the above we learn of some further kinds of punishments which were current in the schools of Bengal even as late as the 19th century. These were, according to Mr. Adam<sup>1</sup> who visited a number of schools of this province in 1834, fifteen in number. Among the punishments noted by him, the more noticeable were the following :—

(1) ত্রিভঙ্গী—Subjecting the offender to an agonising posture. The legs were stretched to their utmost capacity and the upper part of the victim's body was kept erect, making a triangle of him (from ত্রিভঙ্গ, *lit.* 3 bends).

(2) নাড়ুগোপাল—In which the body was reduced to crawling, with one hand raised up halfway between crawling and squatting.

(3) সূর্য্যমুখো—Requiring a boy to keep standing facing the sun.

(4) কপাল চিরিয়া দেওয়া—Scratching the offender's forehead with the sharp point of paddy causing the part

<sup>1</sup> See বিক্রমপুরের ইতিহাস by Jogendranāth Gupta, p. 333. See Calcutta Review, No. IV, p. 934. See also Śaradā-maṅgal by Dayārām edited by the author of the present work and published in the Journal of Letters (Calcutta University), Vol. XXIII.

to bleed. Boys were subjected also to ant-bites and to the painful sensation caused by the touch of Bichuṭi plant—a kind of nettle (*Tragia involucrata*),—as we hear from old men of the villages.

It seems from the above that primary schools were run in the past almost exactly on the same lines as they are done to-day in the obscure nooks of Bengal. The Kindergarten system has very little hold on the Pāṭhśālās even of the present day, though it is being adopted in some of our secondary schools. Although primary education was not free, still it had its benefits, as the whole community realised its responsibility to maintain the Gurumahāśaya. The education that was imparted was quite practical and it made a village boy fit to earn his pittance to whatever calling Providence called him. Primary education in those days brought the prince and the peasant, the Brāhmaṇ and the Sūdra, to the same level, without the least difference or distinction. We find reference to this state of things in many old Bengali poems, chiefly in folklore. The beginner often, after acquiring elementary education, received technical knowledge at his home in the particular craft followed by his ancestors. Those students who wanted to have a better literary education read the old Bengali poems, such as Caṇḍī-Kāvya and Annadā-Maṅgal, and made a further advance in Mathematics under the redoubted Gurumahāśaya.

The vocational and technical education was vitally related to the primary education. The boys often found an opportunity to acquire knowledge of technical matters at their own homes fitting the calling of their ancestors.

We get an insight into the vocational education in the Caṇḍī-Kāvyas and the Manasā-Maṅgal poems. The following is taken from the Caṇḍī-Kāvya by Dviḷa Harirām who flourished in the 16th century.

<sup>1</sup> “Near the houses of the Brāhman̄s reside the astrologers. On finishing their bath in the morning they take their seats on the tanned skin of a deer, for the purpose of studying the astrological works. Some read the annotations on astrology known as the Bhāswatī-dīpikā and some study রাশিচক্র (the zodiac). Some again draw the figures of the

<sup>1</sup> ব্রাহ্মণ সমীপে বৈসে দৈবজ্ঞের পাড়া ।  
 প্রভাতে করিয়া যান ফেলি মৃগছড়া ॥  
 ভাস্বতী দীপিকা কেহ পড়ে রাশিচক্র ।  
 সূর্য্যসিদ্ধান্ত দেখি করে গ্রহচক্র ॥  
 নুতন পঞ্জিকা কেহ বিচারে বসিয়া ।  
 গ্রহখুঁট করে রাশে সাবধান হয়্যা ॥  
 বালকের কোঠী কেহ লিখে দশাক্রম ।  
 গ্রহদৃষ্টি বলাবল কোন গ্রহ সম ॥  
 পঞ্জিকা পড়য়ে কেহ নগরে নগরে ।  
 গ্রহদোষ দিয়া কার চালু কড়ি হরে ॥  
 বন্ধ্য্য মৃতবৎসা দেখায় আসি হাত ।  
 চালু কড়ি দান কর হব পুত্র সাত ॥  
 তৃতীয় গ্রহর বেলা গগনেতে হয় ।  
 চালু কড়ি ডালি বড়ী লয়্যা ঘরে যায় ॥  
 আইল অষ্টগণ সমাদর পায়্যা ।  
 বীরের আজ্ঞায় বস্ত্রে ঘর বাড়ী লৈয়া ॥  
 ধন-ধাশু দিল রাজা বাহন ভূষণ ।  
 একান্ত হইয়া করে গ্রহ অধ্যয়ন ॥  
 চিকিৎসাদর্পণ কেহ পড়য়ে নিদান ।  
 বিজয় রক্ষিত টীকা করে অনুমান ॥  
 চক্রদত্ত পড়ে কেহ দ্রব্যগুণাগুণ ।  
 ধাতুয়ারণ করে যন্ত্র করি তুণ ॥  
 পিত্তধাতু অমৃত দিয়া করে রসায়ন ।  
 ধারণ-বটিকা বাঁধে দিয়া কষায়ন ॥

planets after consulting the work *Sūryya-siddhānta* (the celebrated writer of which was *Āryyabhaṭṭa*). Others again discuss the forecast in the almanac of the new year while some calculate carefully the true position of a planetary body in the zodiac. Some one of the profession draws the horoscope of a boy mentioning therein the aspect or position of the planets at birth and at different ages. He never forgets to calculate the relative strength of each planet and mentions carefully which is for, which is against, and which is neutral, in shaping the fortunes of the boy concerned. Some take their round in the town reading the almanac and defraud people of their money by showing the evil influences of planets over them, and the frightened souls propitiate the astrologers by giving presents. Women who are barren or who lose their children frequently, come to them to have their palms examined by these men. These astrologers then advise them to come with such presents as money and rice. According to these men this is the only way of being blessed with children. In this way the astrologers earn their living and return home in the afternoon. The *Ambaṣṭhas* came to settle (in *Kaliṅga*) being respectfully invited by the king. The king presents them with valuable gifts and conveyances (elephants and horses) and ornaments. They are great scholars and remain merged in study. Some read *Cikitsā-darpaṇ*, and some read *Nidān* (pathology), while some peruse the commentaries of *Bijay Rakṣit*. Some read *Cakradatta* <sup>1</sup> and some again read Applied Chemistry.

নগরে চিকিৎসা করি পায় নানা ধন ।

আনন্দে পালন করে নিজ পরিজন ॥

—দ্বিজ হরিরামের চণ্ডীকাব্য ।

<sup>1</sup> *Cakradatta*, a medical book, was written by *Cakrapāṇidatta* (a Bengali) who flourished in the middle of the eleventh century, during the reign of *Nyāyapāla*.

Some reduce metals for preparing drugs and medicines and some weigh them. With various ingredients they prepare '*Rasāyanas*'<sup>1</sup> and pills with astringent juice (*Kaṣāyana*).<sup>2</sup> They carry on their profession in the town and maintain their families in joy.

During the Buddhist times the portals of higher learning were thrown open to all people irrespective of caste in the monasteries and the laymen had to turn Bhikṣus to be entitled to a seat there. When Buddhism declined, the old school of Hinduism was not strict in admitting pupils to Sanskrit *ṭols*. The merchants had free access there as we find in the *Chandīmaṅgals*.

We shall try to show in the following lines the extent of efficiency in cultural education in this country and the courses that were taught in the *ṭols* or colleges. Besides Sanskrit—Prakrit, Pali and Bengali were taught in Sanskrit *ṭols*.

The proper age for beginning higher studies was perhaps twelve when a student after finishing his school-course desired to continue further studies. Thus we learn in the autobiography of Kṛttivās (15th century)—

“When I completed my eleventh year and entered the age of twelve, I started for the north to prosecute my studies further.”<sup>3</sup>

Although no fee was charged in *ṭols* yet there was the practice of presenting the Guru with some gifts (as I said

<sup>1</sup> *Rasāyana*—“বঙ্গর-ব্যাধি-বিশ্বংসি ভেষজং তদ্রসায়নম্” (A medicine which destroys infirmities of old age and disease). The word also means “Chemistry.”

<sup>2</sup> *Kaṣāyana*—কষায় means astringent. It may also mean to colour.

<sup>3</sup> এগার নিবিড়ে যখন বারতে প্রবেশ ।

হেনকালে পড়িতে গেলাম উত্তর দেশ ॥

—কৃষ্ণিবাসের রামায়ণে তদীয় আশ্চরিত ।

before) on the student's completion of education. Thus, we find the following in the above autobiography :—

“I thought first to acquire a full course of higher education on completion of which I returned home by paying fees (dakṣiṇā) to my preceptor.”<sup>1</sup>

The defaulter in this respect was threatened with punishment in the next life, if not in the present one. Says Dayārām :

“In my previous life I received education from my Guru but did not pay my fees due to him. For this just reason mother Saraswatī (the goddess of learning) put me to so much troubles.”<sup>2</sup>

Sanskrit was mainly taught in the *ṭols*. The subjects were generally six in number according to the time-honoured custom. These were probably Kāvya (Poetry), Vyākaraṇ (Grammar), Jyotiṣ (Astronomy or Astrology), Chhanda (Rhetoric), Nirukta (Lexicon) and Darśan (Philosophy). The students used to learn these six subjects. Thus in Sārādāmaṅgal—

“I desired to acquire knowledge in the six Śāstras and the Bhāgavata.”<sup>3</sup>

বিদ্যাসাঙ্গ করিতে প্রথমে হৈল মন ।

গুরুকে দক্ষিণা দিয়া ঘরকে গমন ॥

—কুন্তিবাসী রামায়ণে তদীয় আশ্চরিত ।

পূর্বেতে পড়িয়া পাঠ না দিল দক্ষিণা ।

অতএব করিল মাতা এত বিড়ম্বনা ॥

—দয়ারামের সারদামঙ্গল ।

ষট্‌শাস্ত্রে বিদ্যা পাব সত্য কর সাতে ।

সুৰভিস্বরূপ যেন শ্রীভাগবতে ॥

—সারদামঙ্গল, বঙ্গসাহিত্য-পরিচয়, ২য় খণ্ড

(দীনেশচন্দ্র সেন), পৃঃ ১৩৯২ ।

Besides these there were many other subjects<sup>1</sup> in which a student had to acquire proficiency. The following lines are given to furnish an idea of the range of subjects taught in the *toles* of Old Bengal.

<sup>1</sup> “The Rājā of Benares sent his son to a Guru for learning the Śāstras. The prince began to read Āgam and Nigam (*i.e.*, the Tantrik Literature) and the holy Bhāgavata. He also did not omit to read the different Purāṇas. Besides he studied all the Saṁhitās, prosody, *e.g.*, Kāvya-Prakāś, Itihāsa (chronicles), the Vedānta and the Yoga System of Philosophy. He did not omit to acquire a full knowledge of all the Śāstras

That paying a parting fee was prevalent even in the days of the Mahābhārata may be gleaned from the story of Utaṅka who suffered so much in finding a Kṇḍal or earring for the wife of his Guru, who demanded it.

1

এইমতে ধনস্তরি জন্মিল সংসারে ।  
 লক্ষ্মী অধিষ্ঠান হৈল সে রাজার ঘরে ॥  
 দিনে দিনে বাড়ি যেন চল্লের সমান ।  
 কাশীরাজা মহোৎসবে কৈল নানা দান ॥  
 শাস্ত্র অল্পসারে সব কৈল সংস্কার ।  
 গুরুর নিকটে দিল শাস্ত্র জানিবার ॥  
 আগম নিগম পঠে ভগবত পূতা ।  
 নানান পুরাণ পঠে ভগবদ্গীতা ॥  
 সকল সংহিতা পঠে কাব্য-পরকাশ ।  
 জানিল সকল শাস্ত্র যত ইতিহাস ॥  
 বেদান্ত পঠিয়া পঠে যোগাস্ত বিচার ।  
 কালিকা সাধন কৈল অনেক প্রকার ॥  
 তুষ্ট হৈয়া মহাদেব বর অধিষ্ঠাতা ।  
 মহাজ্ঞান দিলা আর গারুড়ী সংহিতা ॥

—দ্বিজ বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল, ধনস্তরির জন্ম ।

including the Tantras as he worshipped the Goddess Kālī with mystic rites. The God Śiva blessed him by imparting the mystic knowledge known as the ‘Mahājñān’ and the Gāruḍi-Saṁhitā.’<sup>1</sup>—Manasāmaṅgal by Baṁśīdās, Birth of Dhanwantari.

At another place, *e.g.*, in the Chaṇḍī-Kāvya of Dwija Harirām we learn that—

<sup>2</sup> “In the morning the Brāhman̄s bathe and worship their household deities. Then some of them study Lexicon,<sup>3</sup> some Gītā and some six systems of Philosophy. Some of them discuss Āgam and Nigam and some hear the discourses on them.”

In the Chaṇḍī-Kāvya of Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām we get an elaborate description of text-books read in the *toles* of bygone days (16th century) which runs thus :—

“Śrīpati Datta paid his constant attention to the studies of the Śāstras. He always read and wrote with deep attention. His retentive memory increased every

<sup>1</sup> This Saṁhitā or science treats of cure in cases of serpent bites.

<sup>2</sup> প্রভাতে করিয়া দ্বান                      পূজে দেব ভগবান্

কেহ পূজে দেব পঞ্চানন ।

শব্দশাস্ত্র কেহ গীতা                      মীমাংসা করয়ে কথা

কেহ পড়ে ছয় দরশন ॥

আগম নিগম কথা                      কেহ বসি কহে তথা

কেহ বসি করএ শ্রবণ ।

—হরিরামের চণ্ডীকাব্য ।

<sup>3</sup> The Hindus made it a point to study Lexicon along with Grammar before they attempted to read Literature. Amarakoṣa was generally committed to memory.

See also for text-books the story of Kaṅka and Līlā (p. 258, Vol. 1, Bengali) of the Mymensingh Ballads, and Chaitanyamaṅgal by Vṛndāvan Dās in which books read by Chaitanya Deva, are given.



day. He studied the commentary known as 'Rakṣit-Pañjikā-Tikā,'<sup>1</sup> the Nyāya philosophy, the Encyclopaedia,<sup>2</sup> commentaries on the Gaṇas<sup>3</sup> (Gaṇavṛtti) and the commentary on Pāṇini's Grammar called Ujjvala-vṛtti.<sup>4</sup> He also finished reading the works of Vāmana,<sup>5</sup> Daṇḍī<sup>6</sup> and Piṅgala<sup>7</sup> (containing various metres). He also took much interest in the study of the poetical works of Bhāravi and Māgha,<sup>8</sup> which gladdened the heart of his well-wishers.<sup>9</sup> After going through the grammatical commentary Durghaṭa-Vṛtti,<sup>10</sup> he became prominent in the gathering of the learned\* wherein he always engaged himself in discussing and debating abstruse matters of dispute. His constant subjects of study, among various others, were Bhaṭṭi's works,<sup>11</sup> Lexicon, Jaimini's Mahābhārat, Meghadūta,<sup>12</sup> Naiṣadha,<sup>13</sup> Kumārasambhava,<sup>14</sup> Raghuvamśa,<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A commentary on medical works by Vijay Rakṣit.

<sup>2</sup> Among the Encyclopaedia the most widely read was "Amarakoṣa" by Amara Singha.

<sup>3</sup> In the Sūtras of Pāṇini "Gaṇas" are particular sets of words which are treated in a particular way. Gaṇavṛtti means a treatise or commentary on the Gaṇas.

<sup>4</sup> A commentary on Pāṇini's Grammar.

<sup>5</sup> Two works stand in the name of Vāmana (evidently two persons)—one is a commentary (known as Kāśika-vṛtti, 650 A.D.) on Pāṇini's Grammar and another is a work on Rhetoric called "Kāvya-lālikāra-vṛtti" (8th century).

<sup>6</sup> Daṇḍī (end of 6th century) was a celebrated poet and rhetorician. His poetical work "Daśakumāra-charitam" and the work on rhetoric called "Kāvya-darśa" are well-known.

<sup>7</sup> Piṅgala was the author of a work dealing chiefly with post-Vedic Prosody called "Chandaḥ-Sūtra."

<sup>8</sup> Bhāravi, the poet of "Kīrātārjunīyam" (6th century A.D.).

<sup>9</sup> Māgha, the poet of "Śiśupāla-Vadha" (9th-10th century A.D.).

<sup>10</sup> The Durghaṭa-Vṛtti is a commentary on Pāṇini's Grammar (7th century).

<sup>11</sup> Bhartrihari (died 651 A.D.) wrote the poem of Bhaṭṭi-Kāvya.

<sup>12</sup> Meghadūta (The Cloud-messenger), a poem by Kālidāsa (5th century A.D.).

<sup>13</sup> "Naiṣadha" a poem, composed by Śrīharṣa (7th century).

<sup>14</sup> The poem Kumārasambhava was written by Kālidāsa.

<sup>15</sup> The poem Raghuvamśa was also written by Kālidāsa.

and the Rāghava-Pāṇḍaviya.<sup>1</sup> Besides these he also became very proficient in Ratnāvalī<sup>2</sup> and Sāhitya-Darpaṇ.<sup>3</sup>

The Tantra Śāstras formed a peculiar feature in the subjects of study before the advent of Chaitanya Deva and

<sup>1</sup> Rāghava-Pāṇḍaviya, a poem by Kavirāja (800 A.D.).

<sup>2</sup> Śriharṣa was the author of the drama Ratnāvalī (1st half of the 7th century A.D.).

<sup>3</sup> Sāhitya-Darpaṇ (a work on Rhetoric) was written by Viśwanāth Kavirāj (about 1450 A.D.).

*N.B.*—In the Chaṇḍikāvya (Baṅgabāsi Ed.) we find also the following names among others :—

(1) Mālatī-Mādhava by Bhavabhūti (1st half of the 8th century A.D.).

(2) The Nītisāra (a work on Politics) by Kāmandaka (about 400 A.D.).

(3) The Prose romance Vāsavadattā by Subandhu (early 7th century A.D.).

From the above it may be seen that in regard to higher education the portals of learning were not shut to the inferior castes as they could sit at the foot of a Brāhmaṇ Guru by the side of a Brāhmaṇ boy and receive a thorough training in various Śāstras :

পড়য়ে ত্রীপতি দত্ত                      বুঝয়ে শাস্ত্রের তত্ত্ব  
 রাত্রি দিন করিয়া ভাবনা ।  
 নিবিষ্ট করিয়া মন                      লিখে পড়ে অমুক্ষণ  
 দিনে দিনে বাঢ়য়ে ধারণা ॥  
 রক্ষিত পঞ্জিকা টীকা                      গ্রায় কোব নানা শিক্ষা  
 গণবৃত্তি শাস্ত্রের বর্ণনা ।  
 জানিতে সক্ষির তত্ত্ব                      পড়িল উজ্জলবৃত্তি  
 বিত্তা বিনা নহে অশ্রমণা ॥  
 করিয়া বামন দণ্ডী                      পড়িয়া করিল খণ্ডী  
 নানা ছন্দে পড়িল পিঙ্গল ।  
 করি দৃঢ় অমুরাগ                      পড়িল ভারবি মাঘ  
 বন্ধুজনে বাড়ে কুতূহল ॥  
 পড়িয়া তুর্ঘটবৃত্তি                      ধীর সভায় পুরোবত্তী  
 নিরন্তর করয়ে বিচার ।  
 দিবানিশি যত্নবান্                      পড়ি ভটি অভিধান  
 পুঁথি শুনি বিবিধ প্রকার ॥

the ascendancy of Vaiṣṇavism in the 15th-17th centuries. The Tantras (otherwise known as Āgam) were perhaps the religious and literary legacy from Buddhism<sup>1</sup> in Bengal, although it originally came from outside, perhaps from China. Mystic knowledge such as the 'Mahājñān' and 'Āḍāi-Puṭijñān' was its peculiar feature. In it is also found the peculiar term 'Āḍāi-Akṣar' to denote mystic writing. These terms have been repeatedly mentioned in the Mayanāmatī songs and the Dharmamaṅgal poems.

The Bhakti cult as inculcated by the Vaiṣṇava gave rise to a literary school which, though it expressed itself mainly through the medium of Sanskrit, also gave a great impetus to Bengali. In one of the most famous works of the Vaiṣṇavas, *e.g.*, Chaitanya-Charitāmṛta (17th century) of Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj, Sanskrit was employed for the purpose of a commentary while the body of the book was written in Bengali. Besides this work,—'Chaitanya-Bhāgavata,' 'Chaitanya-Maṅgala,' the Kaḍchā (of Govindadās) and other Bengali works as also the Sanskrit works by Rūpa, Sanātana and Jīva deserve special mention as referred to in the Vaiṣṇava literature.<sup>2</sup>

Navadwīp was the centre of Sanskrit learning in the days of Hindu rule. Even under the Mahomedans it

জৈমিনি ভারতপুত                      কাব্য পড়ে মেঘদূত

নৈষধ কুমারসম্ভবে ।

দিবানিশি নাহি জানি                      পড়ে রঘু খেতবাণী

রাঘব পাণ্ডবী দেবে ॥

অব্যাহত কাব্য পড়ি                      অভ্যাস করিল বড়ি

রত্নাবলী সাহিত্যদর্পণে ।

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য ।

<sup>1</sup> See Sāstri's Introduction to Modern Buddhism by N. Vasu. See Calcutta Review, May 1933 (article on the Tantras).

<sup>2</sup> See the First Taranga of Bhaktiratnākara by Narahari Chakravartī and Prem-Vilāsa by Nityānanda Dās (12th and 13th Vilāsa, pp. 135, 138, 151 and 174).

occupied that pre-eminent position and became the seat of Navya-Nyāya (the new school of Nyāya Philosophy) which attracted students from all parts of India. The educative value of the place increased tenfold with the advent of new Vaiṣṇavism which emanated from this place. We get the following description of the place during the boyhood of Chaitanya Deva (15th century) in the 'Chaitanya Bhāgavata' of Vṛndāvan Dās who flourished in the 16th century. •

<sup>1</sup>“Who can adequately describe the prosperity of Navadvīp? At each of her landing ghats, which were many, numberless people thronged to bathe. Amongst them people of all ages might be seen. By the grace of Saraswatī (the goddess of learning) all people of Navadvīp acquired scholarship. Such was the enthusiasm for learning that even a young scholar would challenge the veteran to a free intellectual debate. People from different countries flocked to Navadvīp. Here they completed their education. The Professors could be counted by lakhs,<sup>2</sup> so

1

নবদ্বীপের সম্পত্তি কে বর্ণিতে পারে ।  
 একো গঙ্গাঘাটে লক্ষলোক স্নান করে ॥  
 ত্রিবিধ বয়সে একো জাতি লক্ষ লক্ষ ।  
 সরস্বতী দৃষ্টিপাতে সবে মহা দক্ষ ॥  
 সবে মহা অধ্যাপক করি গর্ব্ব ধরে ।  
 বালকে হো ভট্টাচার্য্য সনে কক্ষা করে ॥  
 নানা দেশ হৈতে লোক নবদ্বীপে যায় ।  
 নবদ্বীপে পড়িলে সে বিজ্ঞানস পায় ॥  
 অতএব পঢ়্‌য়ার নাহি সমুচ্চয় ।  
 লক্ষ কোটি অধ্যাপক নাহিক নির্ণয় ॥

—বৃন্দাবন দাসের চৈতন্য-ভাগবত ।

<sup>2</sup> The word 'lakh' in old Bengali was not always used to denote the specified number of mathematical figure but was a common word to indicate a large number.

what is to be said of the number of pupils ? ” There is some substantial truth in the statement made above by the poet.

For subtle emotions the Vaiṣṇava Lyrics have a unique position. These are expressed oftentimes in a peculiar dialect—the Braja Buli. Their intellectual subtleties are proved by the Navya Nyāya which made the colleges of Nadiyā ahead of all other colleges of India, inviting students from all parts of it to this redoubted centre of learning. The works of Raghunāth Śiromaṇi and Jagadīś are well-known. The Bengalis proved their talents for reasoning so marvellously that the Chaitanya-Bhāgavata asserts that in the *ṭols* of Navadvīp even a boy often challenged veterans for a debate in logic in the 15th century (“বালকে হো ভট্টাচার্য্য সনে কক্ষা করে”). It is for completing their high education in logical studies that the students of other provinces of India assembled in the far-famed Nadiyā *ṭols*.

Debate in a society of learned men was very common in those days. An youth after passing his examination in a *ṭol*, which was sometimes very stiff<sup>1</sup> would not think his education properly complete unless and until he maintained his position as a specialist in a particular subject for which he got his degree, by an open debate with the scholars of established reputation. The extensive touring that was required on the part of one desiring discussion, was known as *দিগ্বিজয় ভ্রমণ*. Perhaps the intellectual Bengalis would undertake to this sort of *দিগ্বিজয়* (*lit.* world-conquest) and aspired to academic victory when they

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the stiffest examination of those days was known as ‘শলাকা পরীক্ষা.’ The student was first required to examine a MS. carefully. He did it for a little time. Then needle was passed through a word of the book—the whole book was thus pierced through. Then the student by his retentive memory could tell through what words of each page the needle passed. We know the celebrated Bāṣudev Sārabhaṇma passed this examination. Cf. also some novel methods of examination in China.

had lost their independence and their chances for military victories. The defeated Paṇḍit had to acknowledge formally in a written document his own defeat which was termed 'জয়পত্র' or 'letter of victory.' The discussion on controversial matters on such an occasion as between দ্বৈতবাদ and অদ্বৈতবাদ was known as 'বিচার' or 'discussion.' We know the celebrated Śaṅkarāchāryya went on such a campaign to establish অদ্বৈতবাদ while Chaitanya Deva incidentally did the same and established দ্বৈতবাদ. His conquest over Keśab Kāśmirī is a well-known event in the Vaiṣṇava history. Similar<sup>1</sup> episodes also exist in connection with the life of Rūpanārāyaṇa who on one occasion challenged Rūpa and Sanātana, but was ultimately vanquished by Jīva Goswamī, all of whom settled in Br̥ndāvana, and on another occasion acted as a judge in a hot debate between Rājā Narasiṁha Ray of Pakkapalli and Narottam. The local noblemen were always great patrons of such discussions, and not only on stray occasions but also regularly such discussions were fostered by the rich whose courts thronged with the erudite Paṇḍits. The whole society was great admirers of such debates.

Physical culture was essential to complete one's education. Thus in the Padmā Purāṇa (Manasā-maṅgal) of Baṇśīdās (16th century) we get the following :—

<sup>2</sup> "The boy gradually increased in years like the *kalā* or digits of the moon and the lotus blossoming in a tank.

<sup>1</sup> See the *Prema-Vilāsa* by Nityānanda Dās (the 19th Vilāsa) and Narottama-Vilāsa by Narahari Chakravartī.

১                    দিনে দিনে বাড়ে বাল্য,                    যেমন চক্রে কলা,  
                         পদ্ম যেন বাড়ে সরোবরে ।  
                         মহারঙ্গ কুতুহলে,                    চারি বৎসরের কালে  
                         পুত্রের কঠিনী দিল করে ॥

Passing through some ceremonies the boy began his student-life at the age of four (rather early). The merchant's son was given the education of a prince. Thus he was trained in the art of using arms, in poetry and in the various Sāstras. He became expert in the lore of various Sāstras and passed his time often in discussing topics with the learned men. He became practised in riding horses and elephants and revelled in hunting excursions when he wore the dress of a warrior. At this time he took a bow and a quiver full of arrows. He also learned the art of wrestling with great care and never allowed himself to pass his time idly."

Padmā Purāṇa by Baṇśidās, p. 363 (about  
Lakṣmīndra).

The training of the Bengalis in spiritual matters was given by various means. The Kathakatās, the Kīrtans and the Yātrās disseminated spiritual truths amongst all people and the children heard from their grandmothers and other elderly female relations stories from the Mahābhārata, the Bhāgavata and the Rāmāyaṇa which helped the

যেমন রাজার নীত,                      পাঠে হৈল সুশিক্ষিত  
অস্ত্রবিদ্যা কাব্যকলা আর ।  
নানা শাস্ত্রে বিচক্ষণ,                      লইয়া পণ্ডিতগণ,  
সদা করে শাস্ত্রের বিচার ॥  
অথ হস্তী পৃষ্ঠে গতি,                      মুগয়ায় রুষ্টমতি,  
লৈয়া তুল তীর ধনু সাজ ।  
মল্লবিদ্যা পরিশ্রম,                      করিতে হৈল সক্ষম,  
ক্রমে ক্রমে হৈল যুবরাজ ॥

—বংশীদাসের পদ্মপুরাণ, পৃঃ ৩৬৬ ।

See also Ālāol's *Padmāvat* (ed. by Maulvi Hamidullah Marhum), pp. 118-123 (16th century), for physical culture, and pp. 123-127 for literary attainments of the people of the past.

growth of their spiritual nature. The songs of Ramprasād and of Fakirs were constantly in the air to develop the same.

## B

### *Education of Women*

Education of women once attained a high development in this country. Bengal being once a stronghold of Buddhism, her women received education almost equally with men. The glimpses of society to be found in the folk-lore and writings of the village-poets, confirm this point in no uncertain manner. Although at the time of Paurāṇik reaction caste-system and Brāhmanism retarded the cultural progress of our women, still the tradition was not altogether lost. We see how the force of character and standard of education of women continued almost unchanged, from the works of the Bengali poets of a later age. There was a time when women were not only intellectually trained like men but also in physical culture matched the opposite sex.

Instances abound in the folk-lore of Bengal to show that girls used to read in the same schools with boys. Thus in the story of Puṣpamālā in 'Thākurmār-jhulī' by D. R. Mitra we find a princess and a Kotowāl's son reading in the same school.<sup>1</sup>

That the girls were sent to the Pāṭhśālā may be gleaned from such old songs as the 'Songs of Rājā Govindachandra' probably composed in the first half of the 11th century.

<sup>1</sup> See Sen's *Folk-Literature of Bengal*, p. 210. See also D. R. Mitra's *Thākurmār-jhulī* and Fakirrām Kavibhūṣaṇ's story.

(In giving illustrations we shall quote accounts both from legends and historical works. As they all point to the same conclusion, we do believe that the legends also had a historical foundation.)



Thus we find Mayanāmatī, the mother of Rājā Govindachandra, saying :—

“While I was unmarried and consequently lived in the house of my father I was initiated into the mystic knowledge of ‘Mahājñān’ by the sage Gorakṣanāth. When, one day, I returned from the Pāṭhśālā (school) I happened to meet the sage with his sixteen hundred disciples.”<sup>1</sup>

Again in the Sārādāmaṅgal by Dayārām (17th century) we find five princesses—daughters of the King of Baidev reading in a Pāṭhśālā with a prince.<sup>2</sup>

We might at least infer from these evidences that there was a system providing instruction in the primary stage to boys and girls (even perhaps as late as the 17th century) in the same school. Although we read of female education in the works written in the Mahomedan period, we suppose they referred mostly to a previous age, *e.g.*, the Hindu period.

In the seclusion of women within the four walls of the harem, their opportunities for receiving education became considerably circumscribed. Female education, as the present statistics show, is at a low ebb in Bengal, but it was certainly not so during the Hindu period as will be evident from the newly discovered Mymensingh Ballads.<sup>3</sup>

১

যে কালে জনক গৃহে আছিলাম আমি ।

যোরে জ্ঞান দিয়াছেন গৌরনাথ মুনি ॥

পাঠশালে পড়ি আমি যাই নিকেতন ।

যোল শত যোগী লইয়া গৌরক্ষ গমন ॥

—গৌবিন্দচন্দ্রের গান ।

<sup>2</sup> See Sārādāmaṅgal by Dayārām.

<sup>3</sup> See Introduction to the Mymensingh Ballads, pp. lxxix-lxxx. (The cases of Chandrāvati, Maluā, Kamalā and Kājalrekhā.)

See also the Descriptive Catalogue by Mr. Long.

Some examples taken from different works of old Bengali literature at this place will show to what extent literacy prevailed among women in the different sections of the society in this province.

In the legend of Chandrahās we find a girl, Viṣayā by name, adding a letter to the word 'Viṣ' (বিষ—poison) which made it imply her own name. The girl who was a minister's daughter, fell in love with a young man named Chandrahās under peculiar circumstances. She saved his life from the machinations of her father by clever manipulation of a letter and ultimately got herself married with him.<sup>1</sup>

In the Chaṇḍī-kāvya we find a story in which there was a merchant having two wives. When, at one time he remained absent from home, the elder wife being jealous of the younger, got a forged letter purported to be written by their husband to the elder wife, instructing her to oppress the younger wife. The latter glancing at the letter did not fail to discern the fraud at once, as she well knew the handwriting of her husband. Thus we find in Kavikaṇkaṇ Mukundarām's Chaṇḍī-kāvya the following :—

1

নয়নের কজ্জল লইল হুবিধানে ।

লেখিল বিষয়া দান দিহত মদনে ॥

—ঘনশ্যামদাসের মহাভারত ।

Viṣayā took collyrium carefully from her eyes and added the letter ' ঞ ' to the word ' বিষ ' (poison) implying that the girl should be given in marriage to the young man conveying the letter, by Madan (her brother).

Similar devices are also found elsewhere. In the Padmā Purāṇ by Baṇśidās, p. 660, we find the lines ' কিছু কিছু দ্রব্ধ অন্ন লীষ করি পায়া । পত্র লেখে নথ অগ্রে গার রক্ত দিয়া ॥ ' Herein a letter was written with the help of one's blood and a finger nail. Cf. also the case of the girl in love with a young man named Chāṇḍmirā in a story of the same name current in West Mywensingh.

<sup>1</sup> “The two (*c.g.*, the maid-servant of Lahanā, the elder wife, and her neighbour Līlāvātī) conferred together as a result of which the latter woman (being expert in hand-writing) forged the letter of the merchant Dhanapati. First she wrote ‘Swasti’ (স্বস্তি) and then addressed Lahanā as ‘অশেষ মঙ্গলধাম’ just as Dhanapati would address his second wife Khullanā. Khullanā seemingly read the letter being requested by Lahanā, but she suspected the genuineness as it differed in some respect from the style of her husband’s handwriting. Khullanā said to Lahanā smiling, “Sister, I am not at all afraid as somebody else must be cutting jokes with me by writing such a letter. Hear me, O sister, the merchant (our husband) writes a different hand. I suspect this letter to be the work of some cunning fellow.”

We find in the *Chandīkāvya*s, a fowler’s wife exhibiting her sound knowledge of the Paurāṇik stories in her conversation with her husband Kāketu. Thus said Phullarā :—

“You are not rich enough even to possess a cowshed. Then how dare you elope with another man’s wife? The

১

লীলাবতীর পত্র লিখন

দুইজনে একস্থানে করিয়া যুক্তি ।  
 কপট প্রবন্ধে পত্র লেখে লীলাবতী ॥  
 স্বস্তি আগে লিখিয়া লিখিল ধনপতি ।  
 অশেষ মঙ্গলধাম লহণা যুবতী ॥  
 লহণার বোলে ত খুলনা পড়ে পাতি ।  
 হাসেন খুলনা ছন্দ দেখি ভিন্নভাতি ॥  
 বলে দিদি ইথে আমি না করি তরাস ।  
 কেবা পত্র লিখে মোরে করে উপহাস ॥  
 শুন দিদি সাধুর অক্ষর ভিন্ন ছন্দ ।  
 কেবা পত্র লিখে মোরে করিয়া প্রবন্ধ ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য, পৃ: ১৩৮ ।

ten-headed Rāvaṇa was killed by Rāma for stealing his wife Sītā. The Demon-King Śumbha stole Śachī (wife of Indra, the King of the gods). The world could not bear such iniquity and thus he was ruined with his family. I do think you are also going on the same course of destruction. ”<sup>1</sup>—*Chandikāvya*, by *Dwija Harirām*.

With the name of Chandidās, the divine poet of the 14th century(?), is indissolubly connected a washer-woman named Rāmī, whose love for the poet is still looked on with admiration by the people. Thus Rāmī who was both a lover and a poetess expressed the pang of her heart on hearing that the poet being a Brāhmaṇ would forsake her and re-enter his own order by performing an expiation ceremony.

“ Where do you go, Lord of my heart, by neglecting me? Without seeing you, I am in an ocean of grief and can restrain myself no longer. From my girlhood I have dedicated my body to you and never think of anybody else as my mate. Say, what fault have you found with me that you will leave me and go to Mathurā (*i.e.* abandon me for ever)? ”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>           নহ কিছু ধনবান্                   দেখি না গবালি খান  
                  হরিয়ে আনিলে কার কান্তা ॥  
সীতা হরে দশশির                   মাল্য তারে রঘুবীর  
                  শচী হর্যে ছিল শুভ রায় ।  
পৃথিবী না সহে ভার                   বংশনাশ হৈল তার  
                  হেন বুঝি মরিবার উপায় ॥  
  —বিজ় হরিরামের চণ্ডীকাব্য ।

<sup>2</sup>           কোথা যাও ওহে                   প্রাণবঁধু মোর  
                  দাসীরে উপেক্ষা করি ।  
না দেখিয়া মুখ                   ফাটে মোর বুক  
                  ধৈর্য ধরিতে নারি ॥

There was a day when even public women earned fame for their qualifications like Vāsabadattā in Sanskrit literature. Hīrānatī and Surikṣā are two typical examples of such women in Bengal. The following lines are quoted from the Mayanāmatī songs to show the standard of education attained by Hīrā :—<sup>1</sup>

“Hāḍi Siddhā loudly cried, ‘I want to pawn my disciple (the King’s son) for the paltry sum of twelve

বালাকাল হ’তে এ দেহ সঁপিহু

মনে আন নাহি মানি ।

কি দোষ পাইয়া মথুরা যাইবে

বলহে সে কথা শুনি ॥

—রামমণি, বঙ্গসাহিত্য পরিচয়, প্রথম ভাগ, পৃঃ ১০০৩ ।

বার কড়া কড়ি থাকিয়া বান্ধা খুইবার চাই ।  
 বার কড়া কড়ি পাইলে গাঁজা কিনিয়া খাই ॥  
 এই কথা শুনিয়া নটী না থাকিল রৈয়া ।  
 বন্দরের সাউদ মহাজনক আনিল ডাকিয়া ॥  
 দোয়াত খত কলম যোগাইল আনিয়া ।  
 বার কড়া কড়ি নটী আনিল গণিয়া ॥  
 লেখ লেখ বলিয়া হাড়ি হুকুম ভালা দিল ।  
 সন তারিখ ত্রি কাগজত লিখিল ॥  
 ঐ বার কড়া কড়ি কাগজত লিখিল ।  
 ধর্ম্মর নামটা কাগজত লিখিল ॥  
 ঐ কলম ফেলাইয়া দিল হাড়ির বরাবর ।  
 যেন মতে হাড়ি সিদ্ধা হস্তত কলম পাইল ॥  
 রাম রাম করিয়া দস্তখত করিয়া দিল ।  
 বার কড়া কড়ি গণিয়া হাড়ির হস্তত দিল ॥  
 ঐ দিন হৈতে ধর্ম্মী রাজা বন্ধন পড়িল ।  
 ঐ খত তুলিয়া নটীর হস্তত দিল ॥

—মাণিকচন্দ্ররাজার গান

cowries. If I get this small sum, I shall buy Gāñjā and smoke.' On hearing this the fallen woman could no longer stay inside her house but came out and called on the mahājan (money-lender) of the market-place to be a witness in the transaction. She also supplied the writing materials (literally the inkpot, pen and the document-paper) and the twelve cowries after duly counting them. The woman began to write commencing with all the formalities of a letter such as the year, date and the auspicious letter 'Śrī' (ॐ) according to the wishes of the Siddhā. She duly mentioned about the twelve cowries and the name of god Dharma. After finishing her part of the transaction she delivered the pen to the Siddhā who put his signature into the document. The woman made over the twelve cowries to the Siddhā and the latter handed over the document to her. From that day the king became a bond-man of the public woman."

As for the other public woman Surikṣā of the Dharmamaṅgal poems it may be said that pages have been devoted incidentally to show the high standard of education acquired by her. The acrostic questions of this woman to prince Lāusen are very famous.<sup>1</sup>

It is needless to add any more examples. But we cannot but mention the name of Khanā in this place. With all the legends that enshrouded her in mystery we cannot forget the pithy sayings on astronomical and astrological observations which stand against her name in Bengali from time immemorial. Thus the lines about the lunar eclipse, span of life, etc., are household words

<sup>1</sup> See the Dharmamaṅgal poems, by Ghanarām.

It is not possible to quote here the questions as these lines and many others deal with sex-psychology.

in this country<sup>1</sup> and do credit not to her name alone but to the whole womanhood of Bengal.

It is sufficiently clear from the above that education was disseminated broadcast into the country and women participated in them unreservedly. Perhaps this condition refers to a period when the Mahomedans had not arrived in Bengal.

The women besides being literate were good artists and adepts in needle-work and cooking. The following illustrations will furnish some idea in this respect.

It seemed that painting and drawing were specially the women's sphere. Thus we find the following in the story of Kājalrekḥā (Mymensingh Ballads) which will clearly prove to what extent painting was cultivated by the women of this province in bygone days.<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>

1

চন্দ্রগ্রহণ

যে যে মাসের যে যে রাশি ।

তার সপ্তমে থাকে শশী ॥

সেই দিন যদি হয় পৌর্ণমাসী ।

অবশ্য রাহু গ্রাসে শশী ॥—খনা ।

কিসের তিথি কিসের বার ।

জন্মনক্ষত্র কর সার ॥

কি কর শ্বশুর মতিহীন ।

পলকে আয়ু বারদিন ॥—খনা ।

<sup>2</sup> The description here refers to a kind of painting known as the 'Alipanā' painting or more properly drawings executed on the floor with the help of a sort of liquid prepared from crushed rice. The description here is graphic, giving in detail the kind of painting once prevalent in the country. Although the example is taken from poetic fiction still in substance the description seems to have some truth behind it giving historical side-light. The 'Alipanā' painting still exists to some extent in the countryside showing even now the high-watermark of feminine efficiency in the matter of painting.

3

কাজলরেখা আঁকিল—

উত্তম সাইলের চাউল জলেতে ভিজাইয়া ।

ইয়া মুছিয়া কত্না লইল বাটিয়া ॥

“ She (Kājalrekḥā) kept handfuls of rice of a very fine quality—the Śhālī—under water until they were thoroughly softened. Then she washed them carefully and crushed

পিটালি করিয়া কত্ৰা পরথমে আঁকিল ।  
 বাপ আর মায়ের চরণ মনে গাঁথা ছিল ॥  
 জোরা টাইল আঁকে কত্ৰা আর ধানছড়া ।  
 মন্মথ মাঝে আঁকে কত্ৰা গিরলক্ষ্মীর পারা ॥  
 শিবভূগা আঁকে কত্ৰা কৈলাস ভবন ।  
 পদ্মপত্রে আঁকে কত্ৰা লক্ষ্মীনারায়ণ ॥  
 হংসরথে আঁকে কত্ৰা জগা বিষহরী ।  
 ডরাই ডাকুনি আঁকে কত্ৰা সিদ্ধবিজ্ঞাবরি ॥  
 বনদেবী আঁকে কত্ৰা সেওয়ার বনে ।  
 রক্ষাকালী আঁকে কত্ৰা রাখিতে ভুবনে ॥  
 কার্ত্তিক গণেশ আঁকে কত্ৰা সহিত বাহনে ।  
 রামসীতা আঁকে কত্ৰা সহিত লক্ষ্মণে ॥  
 গঙ্গাগোদাবরী আঁকে হিমালয় পর্বত ।  
 ইন্দ্র যম আঁকে কত্ৰা পুষ্পকের রথ ॥  
 সমুদ্র সাগর আঁকে চান্দ আর স্রবণে ।  
 ভাস্কর মন্দির আঁকে কত্ৰা জঙ্গলের মাঝে ॥  
 শেজেতে শুইয়া আছে মরা সে কুমার  
 কেবল নাই সে আঁকে কত্ৰা ছবি আপনার ॥  
 সূচ রাজার ছবি আঁকে পাত্রমিত্র লইয়া ।  
 নিজেরে না আঁকে কত্ৰা রাখে ভাড়াইয়া ॥  
 আলিপনা আইক্যা কত্ৰা জালে ঘিরতের বাতি ।  
 ভূমিতে লুটাইয়া কত্ৰা করিল পন্নতি ॥

—কাজলরেখা, ময়মনসিংহ-গীতিকা, পৃঃ ৩১৬-৩১৭ ।

The Bengali translation of the Sanskrit work Govinda-Līlāmṛta, by Jadunandan Dās, also describes incidentally the skill of women in the sphere of painting in the old days. In spite of poetic excesses there is surely some truth in the description. In the Caṇḍikāvya by Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām (Kāketu story) we get an excellent description of embroidery work.



them on a stone. She prepared a white liquid paste with them and first of all she drew the adored feet of her parents which were always uppermost in her mind. She next drew two granaries taking care to paint the footprints of the harvest-goddess in the paths leading to them, and she introduced at intervals fine ears of rice drooping low with their burden. Then she drew the palace of the great God Śiva and his consort Pārvatī in the Kailās Mountain. In the middle of a big lotus-leaf she painted Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī seated together, and on a chariot drawn by the swans she painted the figure of Manasā Devī from whom all victories proceeded. Then she drew the figures of the fearful witches and the Siddhās and next—of the nymphs of heaven. She drew a Ścora grove (*Prophis aspera*) and under it the figure of Bana Devī (the Sylvan Deity). Then she painted Rakṣā-Kālī—the goddess who saves us from all dangers. The warrior-god Kārtikeya and the writer-god Ganeś she drew next with their respective *bāhanas* or mounts. And then Rāma and Sītā and Lakṣmana were drawn by her admirably. The great Chariot Puṣpaka—the mythological aeroplane—was sketched in her drawings and the Gods Yama and Indra were also introduced in this panorama.

She next painted the sea, the sun and the moon and last of all an old dilapidated temple in the middle of an woodland with the picture of a dead prince inside it. She drew all figures excepting her own. The figures of the needle-prince and of his courtiers were all there, but not any of her own.

When the painting was finished she kindled a lamp fed by sacred butter and then she bowed down with her head bent to the ground."

When we speak of painting we cannot forget another sphere in which our women of old days excelled. It was needle-work. Our old literature abounds with descriptions of exquisite embroidery and needle-work on cloths wrought by women and worn by ladies of fashion. All the Paurāṇik tales would be illustrated by being woven on clothes. Even to-day Dacca is noted for the profession of needle-work carried on by her female population. To what extent Bengali women practised it from generation to generation may be seen from the excellent country-blankets (কাঁথা) made by them from worn-out rags. These contain representations of animals, flowers, leaves, etc., and show what perfection they have attained in the matter. Their credit is also due to the fact that with very ordinary materials they would make something which would attract the admiration of all. Their tact and resourcefulness were also no less praiseworthy. In one instance we perhaps catch a glimpse of historical sidelight when we learn in the Dharmamaṅgal poems, that when Surikṣā the public woman was compelled to supply articles made of leaves to Lāusen whom she loved, she did it with perfect ease. The leaves were turned into plates and cups with decorative pictures on them, as if by magic. Thus we find in the Dharmamaṅgal poems by Ghanarām (pp. 123-124):—<sup>1</sup> “Surikṣā brought a very fine needle and

১  
 হৃক্ষতর তংপর আনিয়া খড়িকা ।  
 হাতাহাতি পত্র সিঞ্জে সুরিক্ষা নায়িকা ॥  
 পরিসর পত্রের রচিল ছই আল ।  
 খুরি বাটী ব্যঞ্জন যোগাতে কালে কাল ॥  
 নানা চিত্র বিচিত্র নির্মাণ পরিপাটী ।  
 পঞ্চাশ ব্যঞ্জন সাজে শতাধিক বাটী ॥  
 রচিত তেতুলপত্রে পরিপূর্ণ বারি ॥

—ঘনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল, পৃ: ১২৩-১২৪ ।

with its help she made two big plates of leaves as well as cups of various sizes also of the same material, no less than one hundred in number, for serving fifty kinds of curries. On them she made very nice pictorial representations and finally made vessels for serving drinking water with such tiny things as tamarind leaves.”

Dancing as an art was once much cultivated in this country. In the *Manasāmaṅgal* poems, the heroine Behulā was given the epithet ‘*Nāchunī*.’<sup>1</sup> She was thus known as ‘*Nāchunī Behulā*’ or Dancing Behulā. In the poems mentioned above we learn that even the life of her dead husband was granted by the gods through her dancing. Illustrations about dancing may be quoted from a number of works of old Bengali literature. We quote below only one example from the *Padāvalī* by Dukhinī :—<sup>2</sup>

“Oh moon-faced one, dance to this tune—(here the tune is given).

So nimbly should thy feet move that the anklets must not sound.

The ornaments shall not jingle nor the *Sāri* rustle.

To this bow-shaped spot your dancing must be confined.

<sup>1</sup> See the *Manasāmaṅgal* poems, by Baṅśīdās, p. 699.

<sup>2</sup> না হবে ভূষণের ধ্বনি না নড়িবে চীর ।  
 দ্রুতগতি চরণে না বাজিবে মঞ্জীর ॥  
 বিমম সঙ্কট তালে বাজাইব ঝাঁপী ।  
 ধনু-অঙ্কের মাঝে নাচ বুঝিব প্রেয়সী ॥  
 হারিলে তোমার লব বেশর কাঁচলি ।  
 জিনিলে তোমারে দিব মোহন মুরলী ॥”

—পদাবলী ( দুঃখিনী ) ।

See Sen's Introduction to the *Typical Selections from Old Bengali Literature*, Vol. I, pp. 34-35. The mode of dancing in it and in many other illustrations are very interesting, showing the modes of Indian dancing.

If you fail, your Beśara (nose-ornament) and your richly embroidered Kāñchuli (bodice) will be at stake. But if you succeed, my beloved, my own dear flute will be yours.’’

That dancing which was cultivated as an art in the Hindu times and which in fact was one of the indispensable qualifications of a fashionable woman in society, was disparaged in later times till its culture became utterly extinct. It is due to the forcible abduction of Hindu women, whose reputation for singing and dancing created desire in Moslem aristocracy to seize them for their harems—a fact which will be borne out by evidences of the Mymensingh ballads and other records.

In higher education—the women rivalled men with admirable success. Our old literature and folk-lore abound with such illustrations. The Princess Vidyā of the story of Vidyā-Sundar may be taken as the type of girls which was once the ideal of society. It might be that these girls received education from eminent teachers in their own homes without taking admission into any *śol*. It is interesting to find these girls challenging others in literary discussions and defeating them. Thus we find in the story of Vidyā-Sundar the following about Vidyā :—<sup>1</sup>

শুন রাজা সাবধানে,                      পূর্বে ছিল এই স্থানে  
বীরসিংহ নামে নরপতি ।

বিদ্যা নামে তার কণ্ঠা,                      আছিল পরম ধন্য  
রূপে লক্ষ্মী গুণে সরস্বতী ॥

প্রতিজ্ঞা করিল সেই,                      বিচারে জিনিবে যেই  
পতি হবে সেই সে তাহার ।

রাজপুত্রগণ তায়,                      আসিয়া হারিয়া যায়,  
রাজা ভাবে কি হবে ইহার ॥

—ভারতচন্দ্রের অনন্যদামস্কল ( বটতলা-সংস্করণ ), ২৫২ পৃষ্ঠা ।

“Hear attentively, O King, the story of a certain monarch who reigned here in the past. The name of the king was Bīr Singha. He had a daughter named Vidyā who earned a good reputation about her peerless beauty and great erudition. She took a vow that none but he who would defeat her in a scholarly debate would be her husband. On hearing this, princes of different countries visited Bīr Singha’s place and engaged the princess in the discourse, but alas, all were discomfited by her. At this the king, her father, became much distressed with the problem of finding a suitable bridegroom for her.”

The following lines will show the nature of discussion in which the girls got themselves engaged with their opponents. The subjects practically covered all branches of the Śāstras. Princess Vidyā of the Vidyā-Sundar story began to discuss many knotty problems with Prince Sundar (her future husband) thus :—

“Both the Prince and the Princess were personages of great erudition and as such when they talked, they talked on the niceties of various branches of the Śāstras.

১      পণ্ডিতে পণ্ডিতে কথা রসের তরঙ্গ ।  
          প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে উঠে শাস্ত্রের প্রসঙ্গ ॥  
          ব্যাকরণ অভিধান সাহিত্য নাটক ।  
          অলঙ্কার আদি সাধ্য সাধন সাধক ॥

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*

         বেদান্ত একমেবাদি দ্ব্যাত্মবাদি তর্ক ।  
          মীমাংসায় মীমাংসার না হয় সম্পর্ক ॥  
          বৈশেষিকে বিশেষ করিতে কিছু নাহে ।  
          পাতঞ্জলে মাধায় অঞ্জলি বাক্তি হারে ॥  
          সাংখ্যেতে কি সংখ্যা হবে আত্ম নিরূপণ ।  
          পুরাণ সংহিতা স্মৃতি যম্মু বিজ্ঞ নন ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

—ভারতচন্দ্রের অন্নদামঙ্গল, পৃঃ ৩১০-৩১১

They argued on Grammar, Lexicon, Literature, Drama, Rhetoric and various other subjects. ....Then topics of philosophical disputations were taken up. These were mainly the Vedānta or Purva-mimāṃsā, the Vaiśeṣika and the Sāṃkhya Philosophy. In the Vedānta, the points of discourse were Monism and Dualism, and as usual no definite conclusion was arrived at—so strong were both sides. No compromise was also effected in the discourse on the Vaiśeṣika Philosophy of Patañjali. The same may be said of the Sāṃkhya Philosophy (of Kapila) which could not decide many abstruse problems. As these learned systems of philosophy failed to decide issues other less important subjects like the Purāṇas, the Saṃhitās (as of Manu), the Smṛtis and others were quite out of place to decide them so that one party might be vanquished.”<sup>1</sup>

Though the character of Vidyā is legendary, the legends, as we have remarked many times, are index to the history of particular periods, but even in our historical literature instances of women who achieved distinction in higher studies are not wanting. The women of the higher classes often received a truly high education. Rāmī, the lady-love of Chāṇḍidās, was an excellent poetess in the fourteenth century (if the legend is true) and among the Vaiṣṇava poets we find mention of Mādhavī the poetess. In the sixteenth century Chandrāvati, the daughter of Baṃśīdās (the celebrated poet of Manasāmaṅgal) composed a Rāmāyaṇa which is noted for its originality and poetic beauty. In the eighteenth century Ānandamayī of Bikrampur (Dacca) was renowned for her scholarship in Sanskrit and for her poetical powers. She wrote many a fine passage in Harililā jointly with her uncle Jaynārāyaṇ. One of her

<sup>1</sup> Bhāratchandra's Annadāmaṅgal, pp. 310-311.

relations Gangāmañi wrote such a neat hand that facsimile of her handwriting has been reproduced in Dr. Sen's book—History of Bengali Language and Literature—as a specimen of calligraphic art. Rāsasundarī who flourished as late as the nineteenth century was another lady who deserves mention for her literary gifts.

It was most peculiar that not only the mental but also the physical side was equally cultured and developed. In this respect the Spartan women of the old Greek world bear apt comparison with them. The Folk-lore and the Dharmamañgal poems inspite of exaggerations are full of examples showing to what extent even the physical side was developed in the days of Hindu rule. These lead us to suspect that there might be some truth behind these legends. In the story of the princess Mallikā furnished by Fakirrām Kabibhūṣaṇ we find the following :—

“The Rājā's daughter Mallikā was not only the most beautiful girl that lived in the then world but also was possessed of much strength of body. She used to go out for hunting excursions in the remotest corners of her royal father's dominions, and kill tigers with her own hands without the help of any weapon. With her short sword she would sometimes strike wild elephants across their trunks which she would chop off with one blow.....  
.....She told her father.....the prince who would seek her hand must make this condition that he must defeat her in fight before such an attempt.<sup>1</sup> In the Dharmamañgal poems too, we find Lakhā, Kaliṅgā and

<sup>1</sup> See Sen's Folk Literature of Bengal, pp. 125-126. See also Sen's Introduction to Mymensingh Ballads, Vol. I, ixix-ixxx, *cf.* also the story of the Princess as described by Poet Tennyson, wherein there was a similar fight between a Prince and a Princess and their subsequent marriage, though under different circumstances.

some other fighting women whose exploits fill up the pages of the above works.''<sup>1</sup>

From the above stories we see there was a day when the girls paid much attention to their mental and physical culture alike as a result of which they were not always married according to the wishes of their parents but had their own choice, as we find specially in the stories of Vidyāsundar, Mallikā and Mahuā (Mymensingh Ballads). The girls would freely participate in literary discussion or physical encounter in a way which seemed strange now-a-days. These stories perhaps give pictures of a time when boys and girls were free to receive education in the same institution and chose their own mates.

There was one kind of education which we have not yet mentioned. It was education through amusement and folk-lore. In this respect we may mention the Kīrtans, the Kathakatās, the Jātrās, the Bratakathās, the Rupakathās and the like. These helped the diffusion of knowledge and moral principles into women (together with men) to a considerable extent. The women participated in listening to the instructive stories equally with men and remembered the moral principles underlying them not in vain.

<sup>1</sup> See the Dharmamañgal poems by Māṇik Gāṇḍuli and Ghanarām.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### CASTES AND PROFESSIONS.

Caste-system does not seem to have been rigorous in the Buddhistic period.<sup>1</sup> We find the *Ḍomas* and the *Hādis* who were so much hated in later days, occupying an elevated position in society and even performing worship in the temples—a function which was once the monopoly of the *Brāhmaṇs*. In “*Māṇikachandra Rājār gān*” the queen-mother advised her son *Rājā Govindachandra* to make a *Hāḍi* his spiritual guide.<sup>2</sup> *Ramāi Paṇḍit*, the celebrated author of the *Śūnya Purāṇa*, was himself a *Ḍoma* by caste, yet he and his descendants performed priestly functions in the temple of god *Dharma*, and were regarded in later days as genuine *Brāhmaṇs*.

That the *Chañḍālas* occupied some position of importance along with the *Ḍomas* may be gleaned from the theological literature of the *Sahajiyās*. Of the three different ways to salvation among them the *Chañḍālimārga* and the *Dombimārga* were recognised as important—the third being

<sup>1</sup> See the Introduction to *Ambattha Sutta* by Rhys Davids, pp. 97-101, and the Introduction to *Sonadanda Sutta* also by Rhys Davids, p. 140 (*Sacred Books of the Buddhists Series*, edited by Max Müller).

<sup>2</sup> মুই জ্ঞান শিখিহু গোরকনাথর ঠাক্রি ।  
তোক জ্ঞান শিখিবার কণ্ড খোলা হাড়ির ঠাক্রি ॥

—মানিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

( I have acquired esoteric knowledge from the sage Gorakṣanāth while you should do the same from the common Hāḍi. )

Avadhūtimārga.<sup>1</sup> In the Dharmamaṅgal poems we find animated accounts of the Chaṇḍālas and the Ḍomas taking the lead in warfares. Kālu Ḍom and his wife Lakṣmyā were heroic persons of great fame.<sup>2</sup>

Another caste which had some position and influence in those days, was the Grahāchāryyas. They were at one time the best of Brāhmaṇs and attached to the court of the Buddhist kings, but latterly the Ḍomas aspired to be their rivals, nay even wanted to assert their superiority as will be evident from the following lines :—

“God Dharma did not like that men belonging to castes other than the Ḍomas should be His worshippers. The priestly function of the Grahāchāryyas in connection with the worship of the “Grahas” (planets) is the root of all sufferings.”<sup>3</sup>

The astrologers formed an influential section of the community though they were not always very well-treated by the aristocracy as we learn from Bijay Gupta’s Manasāmaṅgal.<sup>4</sup>

The anti-Brāhmanic spirit of the Ḍomas is evident in the initiation ceremony known as the copper ceremony (তাম্রদীক্ষা). This ceremony was taken recourse to by those

<sup>1</sup> See H. P. Sāstri’s Introduction to Modern Buddhism, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> See the Dharmamaṅgal poems by Ghanarām, Māṇik Gāṅguli, Rāmachandra Banerjee and others.

<sup>3</sup> অত্ৰ জাতি পণ্ডিত হবৈ ধৰ্ম মানৈ নাই।

এহ কাজে রত হয় ফেটে মরে তাই ॥—নগেন্দ্রনাথ বসু সম্পাদিত শ্রুতপুরাণ।

<sup>4</sup> (i) পাঞ্জি হাতে ডাক্য বলে জুতিষ ব্রাহ্মণ।

—গোবিন্দচন্দ্রের গীত, ৩০১ শ্লোক।

(The Brāhmaṇ astrologer spoke aloud taking an almanac in hand.)

(ii) নফরে তারে মাইল ধাক্কা।—বিজয় গুপ্ত।

(A servant pushed the astrologer out.)

who did not believe in Brāhmanism. In the Hindu society the initiation ceremony was confined to the three higher castes only while the তন্ত্রদীক্ষা of Ramāi and his followers was a peculiar system which opened its portals to the “thirty-six castes” of Bengal.

Among the Nāth-Panthis the ‘Guru’ was an important factor in all spiritual matters.<sup>1</sup> The mystic conversation of Matsyendranāth and his disciple Gorakṣanāth is an interesting episode in the Nāth-Panthi literature. There was among the Dharma-worshippers the custom of worshipping the Gurus, thus earning the name of Gubhājus as opposed to the Hindus who were the Debhājus (worshippers of the Devas).<sup>2</sup>

The Sahajiyās who became so famous and influential in the days of Chaṇḍidās (14th century) were fast rising into prominence in the 17th and 18th centuries as is to be observed from the vast literature which they produced during that period. Their origin is to be traced from pre-Christian Era, in the Sama-Vipplī cult of the Buddhists. They were against caste-system and never admitted the superior position of the Brāhmans.<sup>3</sup>

The Kaivartas were a class of some importance in the Buddhistic period and were divided into two sections—Hālik and Jālik. The Hāliks were ploughmen and Jāliks were fishermen and they are so even now. From the descriptions in the Mymensingh Ballads we learn that

<sup>1</sup> (a) *E.g.*, Haḍi Siddhā, Gorakṣanāth and Matsyendranāth.

(b) দিট করিঅ মহামুহু পরিমাণ ।

লুই ভনই গুরু পুছিঅ জান ॥—চর্যাচর্যাবিশিষ্টয় ।

<sup>2</sup> See Sāstri's Introduction to Modern Buddhism, by N. Vasu, pp. 24-25.

<sup>3</sup> See Sāstri's বৌদ্ধ গান ও দোহা, ৮১-৮৪ পৃষ্ঠা.

the Hāliks or the Hāluā Kaivartas were once well-to-do persons of position and influence. According to MM. H. P. Sāstrī, “the Kaivartas were a powerful race. The ancients called them *Dasyus*, *i.e.*, powerful foreigners who by their raids troubled the inhabitants of the Aryan lands. In the 11th century the Kaivartas formed a powerful confederacy in North Bengal under the leadership of Bhīma, expelled the Pālas from their capital Gauḍa, where they occupied a suburb and temporarily became rulers of Bengal.”<sup>1</sup>

The Yogīs once formed a very influential section of our community. They now belong to the lower stratum of society and live on weaving. “The Yogīs are now trying to take the holy thread and become Brāhmins. They do not know what they were. They were real Yogīs, being descendants of the Nāthas, that influential class to which belonged Matsyendranātha, Gorakṣanātha, Minanātha, Ayinātha, Chaurāṅginātha and others. Their ancestors had numerous followers. Princes and potentates bowed before them. Many Nāthas are still worshipped in temples and holy places in Nepal and Tibet. Gorakṣanath is still worshipped as the principal deity by the Gorkha as a race.....The Dharmaghariyā Yogīs are to be found in large numbers in South-Western Bengal. The so-called Brāhmins who beg with the image of Śītalā in their hands and come from Howrah and Midnapore Districts are all Dharmaghariyā Yogīs. They do not put on the holy thread, but they use copper in some form or other on their person after their initiation to religious life. They worship Dharma at Dharma temples.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Sāstrī's Introduction to Modern Buddhism, by N. Vasu, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> See Sāstrī's Introduction to Modern Buddhism, pp. 16-17.

In the days of Buddhism, the barbers were an indispensable section in society as they are now among the Hindus. A class of barbers were known as the *Kānfādās*. Their duty was to slit the ear which was essential in the Buddhistic initiation known as the “copper ceremony.” It was also done when a person would take the vow of asceticism. The following description as found in the “*Māṇikchandra Rājār Gān*” may be of interest to the reader :

“The razor was snatched away from the hands of the common barber and given to the *kānfāḍa*, who, as soon as he received it, slit the two ears of the king uttering the name of *Rāma*.”<sup>1</sup>

Some of the barbers once received good education. We find in the list of old Bengali poets, the name of one *Madhūsudan Nāpit*, who rendered into Bengali verse the Sanskrit story of *Nala-Damayantī* in the 17th century.

The merchants, represented by various classes as *Sāhās*, *Sāhus* and *Sādhus* (all derived from the word “*Sādhū*”), *Tilis*, *Subarṇabanīks*, *Gandha-banīks*, *Sūḍis* and others had supreme power in their hands owing to the enormous wealth they acquired by trade. They occupied a position and status not inferior to those of princes. Their wealth of which elaborate references are to be found in all old Bengali works, was almost fabulous and their princely style of living and splendour of processions are the subjects

<sup>1</sup>        নাপিতর হস্তর ক্ষুর লইল কাড়িয়া ।  
           ঐ ক্ষুর কাণ-ফাড়ার হস্তে দিল তুলিয়া ॥  
       যেন মতে কাণ-ফাড়া ক্ষুর হস্তে পাইল ।  
       রাম নাম বলিয়া রাজার দুই কর্ণ ফাড়িল ॥

of enthusiastic descriptions in the literature of the cults of Chaṇḍī, Manasā Devī and those of other deities. The heroes of old poems generally belonged to the Gandha-baṇik caste.<sup>1</sup> Chāndsadāgar, Dhanapati, Lakṣmīndra and Behulā were all Gandha-baṇiks. We find eminent authors like Saṣṭhībara Sen and Gaṅgādās Sen, who lived in the 16th century, belonging to the Subarṇa-baṇik caste. This caste was once the rivals of the Sena Rājas and tried to match their lance with the kings of Gauda; they conducted a systematic hostility with Ballāl Sen, the sequel of which was their excommunication from society.

The re-organisation of the Hindu Society against laxities of all sorts may be said to begin in the period between the 9th and the 13th centuries. Though an attempt at giving a stereotyped form to the various castes was made in society yet there was a spirit of liberality in evidence, which we miss in our present society inspite of the so-called enlightenment of which we boast. It was perhaps due to the exigencies of the times that an excommunicated man might be admitted once more to the society by an easy expiation ceremony.

The following is found in Adbhutāchāryya's Rāmāyaṇa :—

“If a Yavana (Mahomedan) forcibly destroys a Brāhman's caste by obliging him to take six handfuls of cooked rice offered by him (the Yavana), then such a person may be taken back into the bosom of society by performing an expiation ceremony, for the fire of Brāhmanical spirit burns in a Brāhman up to six generations. This purity is lost

<sup>1</sup> For the Gandha-baṇiks see the Bengali Pamphlet ‘গন্ধবণিক জাতির প্রাচীন ও বর্তমান অবস্থা’ by Dr. Abināśchandra Dās.

only by taking beef (when no expiation ceremony will avail).''<sup>1</sup>

As already stated inspite of the rigorous injunctions of society, people in those days were certainly far more broad-minded and liberal than now. They knew how to meet the exigencies of a critical situation and devised means to protect their community relaxing their rules to a great extent. Many of the Brāhman families of Bengal were branded with infamy owing to atrocious attacks of the Mahomedans on their women. These women were mostly admitted into society and the insults done to them were white-washed and forgiven on humane considerations—a circumstance which should serve as a lesson to modern Hindus. Instances of Moslem atrocities and forbearing discretion of the Brāhman of those days are to be found in profusion in the old Bengali genealogical works. We refer our readers to the “Pirāli-kāṇḍa” by N. Vasu, Prāchya-Vidyā-Mahārṇava, where the readers will find very glaring cases of atrocity done to Brāhman women by Mahomedans and the forbearance of their kinsmen in re-admitting them to their community after light penances.

The “Doṣas”<sup>2</sup> or defects which touched some Brāhman families giving rise to groups or “melas” may be found in

- <sup>1</sup> বল করি জাতি যদি লএত যবনে ।  
 ছয় গ্রাস অন্ন যদি করায় ভক্ষণে ॥  
 প্রায়শ্চিত্ত করিলে জাতি পায় সেইজনে ।  
 ছয় পুরুষ পর্যন্ত ব্রহ্মতেজ নাহি ছাড়ে ।  
 ব্রহ্মতেজ নাহি থাকে গোমাংস ভক্ষণে ॥—অদ্বুতাচার্যের রাশায়ণ ।

- <sup>2</sup> ফুলিয়া হইল মেল যে যে দোষ তায় ।  
 নান্দা ধান্দা বাকুইহাটি গঙ্গানন্দে পায় ॥  
 খড়দহ মহাকুল সন্দের ভাজন ।  
 দিগ্ভিগত সুখনালী মেলের কারণ ॥

the *Kārikā* or the genealogical work of Devīvar who flourished in the 15th century. Some lines from this work are given below in the foot-note from which it will be seen that in numerous cases, Brāhmaṇ women were tolerated in society after molestation by Mahomedans.

The Moslem contact created three branches of the Brāhmaṇs, *viz.*, Serkhānī, Pīrālī and Śrīmantakhānī. Besides, Jāfarkhānī, Debātā, Bhairabghaṭakī and Hari

বল্লভী হৈল মেল্যপিণ্ডদোষ পাইয়া ।  
 মৈথিলানী একভাগ গোবিন্দ খোড়ী লইয়া  
 মহিস্ত্যা দোষেতে হইল মেল সর্সানন্দী ।  
 সিন্দূরা কৈবর্ত দোষ হৃদয়ে সুবুদ্ধি ॥  
 পণ্ডিতরত্নী মেল উদ্ধরগী ভারে ।  
 আঠাকাশী রঘুসুত পড়ে তারপরে ॥  
 হইল বাঙ্গাল মেল মঘদোষ হেতু ।  
 হড় পায় বিপ্রদাস মেল বধ্য সেতু ॥  
 ছায়া মেল হইল পরে নরেন্দ্র ঘটত ।  
 লখাই আসিয়া তাহে করে আচম্বিত ॥  
 অন্নপূর্ণা দোষ মেল হৈল সুরাই ।  
 সুরাই ভাঙ্গিয়া ছায়া করিল বরাই ॥  
 দিগ্দিপোড়া কাটাদোষে বাণ জড়াজড়ি ।  
 শ্রীমন্তখানীতে কেহো করিলেক বাড়ী ॥  
 অকুতী গুড়দোষে মেল আচার্য্যশেখর ।  
 গোপাল ঘটকী হড় কহি তার পর ॥  
 দিগ্দি গুড়দোষে মেল রাঘব করিলা ।  
 কুল পরিবাদ দোষে বিজয় মজিলা ॥  
 ব্রহ্মবধ চোৎখণ্ডীদোষ চাঁদ পাইয়া ।  
 চাঁদাই হইল মেল জীবধর লইয়া ॥  
 পিণ্ড সংশয়ে মেল করিল মাধাই ।  
 সুখনালী দিগ্দি দোষ বিত্ৰাধরি কই ॥



Majumdarī may be mentioned here. The loss of social status due to contact with the 'Maghs' (Bāngāl-mela) also deserves our passing notice. It may be said that though purity of status was lost still the society recognised their position in society.

রায়ের দিগুি বিয়া ছিল দৈবকৌ নন্দনে ।  
 পারিদোষে পারিহাল সৰ্বলোকে জানে ॥  
 গড়গুড় হুই দোষে মেল প্রমোদিনী ।  
 মৈধিলানী গত দোষে শ্রীরঙ্গভট্ট জানি ॥  
 শতানন্দখানী গুড় পারিদোষ মতে ।  
 ভৈরব ঘটকী মেল যবন দোষ হইতে ॥  
 কাকুস্থী হৈল মেল জাতিদোষ তায় ।  
 আচম্বিতা মেল দিগুি গৌতমেতে যায় ॥  
 দেহটা হৈল মেল যবন দোষ তায় ।  
 দশরথ ঘণ্টেশ্বরী বিপর্যায় পায় ॥  
 মালাধরখানী কুন্দ কতাবধ দোষে ।  
 নড়িয়াতে কুলাভাব কুলাচার্য্যে ঘোষে ॥  
 ধরাধরী শ্রীবর্দ্ধনী চৌৎখণ্ডী লয় ।  
 ওয়াদ্দরি সবে বলে এই পরিচয় ॥  
 পরমানন্দ মিশ্র মেল হইল তাহার পর ।  
 বটেশ্বর নায়কের দোষ তার পর ॥  
 দোপাড়া দোষেতে মেল ঘোষাল রাঘব ।  
 শুভরাজখানী মেল পীতমণ্ডী ভব ॥  
 যবন ও রায়ীতে ভগ্ন হরি মজুমদারী ।  
 গুঙ্গ সৰ্দ্ধানন্দী মেল হড় দোষ ভারি ॥  
 পরে কহি দয়ি মেল অংশ ছয় যথা ।  
 পূর্বে হইয়া পরে আইসে কেবল মাত্র কথা ॥

—(দেবীবরের কারিক)

—বঙ্গের জাতীয় ইতিহাস, ব্রাহ্মণকাণ্ড, পৃ: ১২৩-১২৪

That Moslem and other foreign contact in ordinary course of life was highly injurious to the principle of 'Āchāra' (which was the backbone of Kulinism), may be gleaned from the lines found in "Doṣatantra."<sup>1</sup>

Among the Brāhmaṇs the Sātsatis, the original Brāhmaṇ settlers in Bengal, were probably Sāraswatas, as the gotras of these Brāhmaṇs have a striking similarity with those of the other Sāraswata Brāhmaṇs settled in other parts of India. To derive Sātsatis from "seven hundred" as is sometimes done is very questionable, for it is never known that at any time a statistics of Brāhmaṇs was taken and the number of them settled at seven hundred.<sup>2</sup> Such a practice

যথা রাঢ়ে সেরখানী পীড়ালীভগ্নতা কচিৎ ।

বঙ্গে শ্রীমন্তখানী চ ত্রিভির্দগ্ধা বসুন্ধরা ॥

—( হরিহর ভট্টাচার্য্য, দমুজারি মিশ্র প্রভৃতির মেল কারিক। )

—বঙ্গের জাতীয় ইতিহাস, ব্রাহ্মণকাণ্ড, পৃঃ ২১৪ ।

<sup>1</sup>

ভট্টাচার্য্যের বাড়ীতে পাঁচ পীরের মোকাম ।

তাহাতে নমাজ পড়েন সাগরদীয়ার শ্রাম ॥—দোষতত্ত্ব ।

(Five Mahomedan saints took up their abode in the house of a Bhaṭṭāchāryya Brāhmaṇ. Śyām of Sāgardiya said 'nemaj' with them in that house.)

যুতে জর'জর শূকর ভাজা ।

ভোজন করেন বামুন রাজা ॥

ওরে বাপু নীলকণ্ঠ ।

কেমনে খাইলা শূকরের ঘণ্ট ॥—দোষতত্ত্ব ।

হৃদে যার ব্রহ্ম আছে সেই ত ব্রাহ্মণ ।

বাহু পৈতা কেবল ব্রাহ্মণজাতির লক্ষণ ॥

(The great Brāhmaṇ Nilkanṭha used to take pork fried in ghee. O my boy Nilkanṭha, how could you eat the dish of pork !)

(Nilkanṭha was of Sāvarnagotra and a grandson of Bhairab Ganguly.)

<sup>2</sup> See Sambandha-Nirṇaya, by Lālmohan Vidyānidhi, p. 51.

See also Vamśīvidyārātna's collections of the Kārikās.

was unheard of in ancient Bengal. There is no doubt that waves of enterprising Brāhmaṇ immigrants came in various times to settle in Bengal—the older ones were the Sātsatis and the Āchāryya Brāhmaṇs who once occupied a high rank in society before the advent of the five illustrious ancestors of Kulin Brāhmaṇs.

With the advent of Vaiṣṇavism as propounded by Chaitanya Deva, the caste-system underwent some changes in this land. Though the Bhattāchāryyas (orthodox brāhmaṇs) were trying hard to do away with the old laxities of the Buddhists and the Sahajiyās, the Vaiṣṇavas were making their attempts in the contrary direction. We learn from the Vaiṣṇava literature that Chaitanya converted some Mahomedans into his faith. The cases of Haridās and Bijuli Khān among others may be cited as examples in this connection. Another innovation that the Gaudīya section of Vaiṣṇavism made was the acceptance of a man of a lower caste to the position of a “guru” by a man of a higher caste.

Narottama though born of a Kāyastha family was given the status of a Brāhmaṇ in the great Vaiṣṇava gathering at Kheturi by Vīrachandra, the son of Nityānanda, in a thrilling speech in course of which texts from Haribhakti-vilāsa by Sanātan was quoted. Premvilāsa says that the appreciative audience unanimously accepted the following conclusion :—

True Brāhmaṇ is he who believes in God and acts accordingly. The sacred thread only signifies the particular caste and not the true spirit of a Brāhmaṇ.

The orthodox community under the guidance of the Brāhmaṇs could not, for obvious reasons, tolerate the forward march of the Vaiṣṇava reformers. Not only in the selection of the Gurus but also in other matters they

transgressed the strict rules of society. Though Śrīnivāsa was a Brāhmaṇ, Rāmachandra was a Vaidya and Narottama was a Kāyastha, still they were not afraid to take their meal from the same plate, as if they belonged to the same caste.<sup>1</sup>

Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām, who flourished in the latter part of the 16th century, described at some length the different castes of his day in his celebrated Chaṇḍīkāvya. Thus we find :—

<sup>2</sup> “In the land of Guzrat the Brāhmaṇs received due honours from the king and engaged themselves in the discussion of the various Śāstras. For their learning and for giving benediction to King Kālketu, they received garments and sandal perfumes as reward. The Kulin Brāhmaṇs were divided into various classes or *gāiṇs* according to the villages (fifty-six in all) given to them

<sup>1</sup> See Narottamavilāsa, by Narahari Chakravartī, and Premvilāsa, by Nityānanda.

<sup>2</sup> See Karṇānanda, by Jadunandan Dās, Niryyās III.

পাইয়া বীরের পান                      বৈসে যত কুলস্থান  
বীরের নগরে বিপ্রগণ ।  
শাস্ত্রবিচার করে                      আশিস্ করিয়া বীরে  
নিত্য পায় ভূষণ চন্দন ॥  
কুলে শীলে নহে নিন্দ্য                      মুখটা চাটতি বন্দ্য  
কাঞ্জিলাল ঘোষাল গাঙ্গুলী ।  
পুতিতুও বৈসে শুড়                      রাইগাঁই কেশরী হড়  
ঘটেখরী বৈসে কুলাকুলী ॥  
পরিহাই পীতি-তুণ্ডী                      ঝিকরাড়ী মালখণ্ডী  
ঘোষলী বড়াল কুলমাল ।  
চোটচাণ্ডী পালসাঁই                      দীখাড়ী কুম্মগাঁই  
সাঁই-গাঁই কুলভি পড়্যাল ॥

[illegible]

<sup>2</sup> Gāiñ (from village)—Pertaining to a village (referring to one of the various classes of Rādhi Brāhman from the royal assignment of a separate village to each Brāhman), which were in all fifty-six in number.

functions. They made a show of sandal-marks on their persons, performed pūjās in the houses of other people and lightly bound a bundle of rice and other food which were first dedicated to gods and next appropriated by themselves. The sweet-meat dealers gave them sweets as *Dakṣiṇā* (consideration) for their doing priestly functions at their houses and similar rewards of curd and milk they got from milkmen. The oilmen filled cups with oil and offered them respectfully. Some even paid them in cowries and some paid in pulse-cakes. The village-priests thus always enjoyed plenty. These people visited the houses where Śrāddha was performed in Guzrat city. They exacted priestly fees on the spot as soon as the function was over.

ময়রাঘরে পায় খণ্ড                      গোপঘরে দধিভাণ্ড

তেলিঘরে তৈলকুপী ভরি ।

কোথাও মাসরা কড়ি                      কেহ দেয় দালিভড়ি

গ্রামবাজী আনন্দে সঁাতরী ॥

গুজরাট নগরে                      নগরিয়া শ্রদ্ধ করে

গ্রামবাজী হয় অধিষ্ঠান ।

সাজ করি দ্বিজে কয়                      কাহন দক্ষিণা হয়

হাতে কুশে দক্ষিণা ফুরান ॥

গালি দিয়া লণ্ডে ভণ্ডে                      ঘটক ব্রাহ্মণ দণ্ডে

কুলপাজী করিয়া বিচার ।

যে নাহি গৌরব করে                      সভায় বিড়ম্বা তারে

যাবৎ না পায় পুরস্কার ॥

গুজরাট একপাশে                      গ্রহ বিপ্রগণ বৈসে

বর্ণ দ্বিজগণ মঠপতি ।

দীপিকা ভাস্বতি ধরে                      শাস্ত্র বিচার করে

বালকের দেখে জাওয়াতি ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য ( বঙ্গবাসী ), পৃ: ৮৬-৯০ ।

The match-making Brāhmaṇs conversant with genealogy of different families tried to lower one in a social gathering if not adequately paid his fees. The Graha-Vipras (Astrologers) owing to their inferior position occupied a corner of the city. The Brāhmaṇs of lower castes were heads of 'maths.' There were astrologers who discussed their subjects 'Dīpikā' and 'Bhāswati' and drew horoscopes of children.'

Besides, we get vivid description of the arrival of the Vaidyas, the Kṣatriyas, the Vaiśyas, the Kāyasthas, the Bāṇiās and the Navaśākhās among others. The following sub-castes were among the Navaśākhās: The Goālās, the Oilmen, the Blacksmiths, the Betel-leaf growers, the Potters, the Weavers, the Gardeners, the Barbers, the Sweet-meat sellers, and the Āguris. The Betel-leaf sellers, the Sarāks (weavers of sārīs) the Gandha-bāṇiās, the Saṅkha-bāṇiās, Jewellers, 'bellmetal' Bāṇiās, Suvarṇa-baṇiks, Paśyatoharas (Royal jewellers), and the Pallav-gopas also deserve our special notice.<sup>1</sup>

In this connection may also be mentioned fishermen (Jeliā Dās), cultivators (Hāluā Dās), the Kalus (oilmen), the Bāitis (magicians), the Bāgdīs (good fighters), the Māchuās (dealers in fish), the Kochas, the washermen, the tailors, the Siulis (the palm-juice sellers), carpenters, the ferry boat-men (Pātani), the Bhāts (minstrels), the Chowdulis (palanquin-bearers), the Chunaris, (lime-sellers), the boat-men (mānjhis), the Mālas, the Chaṇḍālas (selling salt and particular kinds of fruits), the Gohalyas (the singers), the Koraṅgas, the Māhrātṭās, the Kols (living in suburbs and professional drummers), the Hāḍis (grass-

<sup>1</sup> The Tāmulis (betel-leaf-sellers and the Gandha-bāṇiās are sometimes taken among the 'Navaśākhās' in places of the weavers and the sweet-meat-sellers.

cutters), the Chāmārs (cobblers), the Domas (makers of wicker-works) and the harlots. <sup>1</sup>

It is peculiar that some non-Bengalis have also been mentioned here such as, the Kochas, the Kols, and the Māhrāṭṭās. The mention of the Māhrāṭṭās as surgeons and eye-specialists is noteworthy. <sup>2</sup> That the physician caste in Bengal had some connection with the Māhrāṭṭās will be observed from their genealogical records in which it is distinctly mentioned that a class of Bengal Vaidyas such as the Nandis and others were settled in Mahārāṣṭra. <sup>3</sup>

The mention of the various castes and their occupations alleged to belong to Guzrat is merely a description of the people of Bengal and their complicated caste-system. In Guzrat Kulinism was never known and the details given by Mukundarām obviously give a picture of Bengali society.

The different branches of the Rārhi Brāhmaṇs mentioned in the list are nevertheless incomplete.

It may not be out of place to mention here the names of castes mentioned in Bhāratchandra's Vidyāsundar. Thus we find in the work written in the middle part of the 18th century, the following :—

“The Brāhmaṇs look after the study of the Vedas, Grammar, Lexicon, Smṛti, and Philosophy. They engage

<sup>1</sup> See Kavikauṇṭha's Chaṇḍikāvya, pp. 86-90. (Baṅgabāsi ed.).

<sup>2</sup> এক ভিতে বসিল মারঠা ।

ফিরে তারা গুজরাটে শোলঙ্গে পিলীহা কাটে

ছানি কাটে দিয়া চক্ষে কাটা ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য ( বঙ্গবাসী ), পৃঃ ৯০ ।

(The Māhrāṭṭās occupied a corner of the city of Guzrat. They used to move about on calls requiring incision on the spleen or the use of lancet for operating a cataract.)

<sup>3</sup> See Chandra Prabhā, by Bhārat Mallik and Kavikauṇṭhahār.



themselves in worshipping the deities at the temples resounded with the sound of conch-shells and cymbals. There were the worship of the god Śiva, reading of the work called Chaṇḍī, sacrifice (Yajña) and Mahotsava (grand feast given by the Vaiṣṇavas). The Vaidyas feel the pulse of patients and thereby diagnose disease. They follow the medical profession for which they study 'Kāvya' and the Āyurveda. The Kāyasthas and sundry other castes look to their individual profession. These castes were the merchants, the jewellers, spice-dealers (Gandha-baṇiks), the bankers (Suvarṇa-baṇiks), Kāṇsāris (bell-metal merchants), Śāṅkhāris (shell-bracelet dealers), Milkmen, Betelleaf dealers, Tilis, Weavers, Mālākārs, Barbers, Kuris (friers of paddy), Blacksmiths, Potters, Āguris, Yugis, Chāsādhopās, Cultivators, Kaivartas, Goldsmiths, Carpenters, Sūḍis (liquor-dealers), Washermen, Fishermen, Guḍis, Chaṇḍālas, Bāḡdis, Hāḍis, Ḍomas, Cobblers, Kurmis, Korāṅgās, Pods, Kāpālis, Tipars, Kols, Oilmen, Bādiās, Gardeners, Merchants, Bāitis, Paṭuās, Kāns, Kasbis, Buffoons and Dancers.”<sup>1</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> ব্রাহ্মণমণ্ডলে দেখে বেদ অধ্যয়ন ।  
 ব্যাকরণ অভিধান স্মৃতি দরশন ॥  
 ঘরে ঘরে দেবালয় শঙ্খ ঘণ্টারব ।  
 শিবপূজা চণ্ডীপাঠ যজ্ঞ মহোৎসব ॥  
 বৈদ্য দেখে নাড়ী ধরি কহে ব্যাধি ভেদ ।  
 চিকিৎসা করয়ে পড়ে কাব্য আয়ুর্বেদ ॥  
 কায়স্থ বিবিধ জাতি দেখে রোজগারী ।  
 বেণে মণি গন্ধ সোণা কাঁসারী শাঁখারী ॥  
 গোয়াল তাম্বুলী তিলী তাঁতি মালাকার ।  
 নাপিত বারাই কুরী কামার কুমার ॥  
 আগরি প্রভৃতি আর নাগরী যতেক ।  
 যুগি চাষা-ধোপা চাষী কৈবর্ত অনেক ॥

If we look into the caste-history of the Bengali Hindus, we find that from the 11th century down, changes and reformation continually went on, all with the object of unification of the Bengal-Hindus. The non-Aryans and the merchants represented by Sāhās and other castes hitherto lay outside the Hindu society as they had avowedly accepted the Buddhist creed in a previous era. The credit of giving them a status in Hindu society is due to the Vaiṣṇava Goswāmīs, who performed priestly functions in their houses and thus elevated them. Formerly no Brāhmaṇ would do so in the houses of these communities most of which were branded as depressed. The Nava-śākhas, as MM. Haraprasād Śāstrī has pointed out, means “New branch,” and we come to know that those castes who formerly had lain outside the pale of our society, were admitted as “a new branch” and given a recognised footing in the Hindu society. The Hindu reformers tried to bring the Kols, and other hill-people within the fold of our society. Under this process of unification the Vaiṣṇavas specially made disciples of these non-Hindus, and converted them to Vaiṣṇavism. The worship of Kālī was a great asset for the purpose of making this unity and then Śāktas had thus a share in this reformation by Tāntrik processes which did away with all caste considerations.

সেকরা ছুতার সুরী ধোপা জেলে শুড়ী ।

চাড়াল বাগ্দী হাড়ী ডোম মুচি শুড়ী ॥

কুরমী কোরঙ্গা পোদ কপালী তেয়র ।

কেলি কলু ব্যাধি বেদে মালি বাজীকর ॥

বাইতি পটুয়া কান কসবী যতেক ।

ভাবক ভক্তির ভাঁড় নষ্টক অনেক ॥

— ভারতচন্দ্রের বিদ্যাসুন্দর

## CHAPTER XIV.

### AGRICULTURE.

Agriculture has always been the principal source of occupation in Bengal. The Old Bengali Literature, besides giving details of cultivation, contains many adages which embody the agricultural wisdom of the people. Thus we find such expressions <sup>1</sup> as “Cultivation should be personally done by the owner of the soil. He should himself plough the land being aided by his son. In case the son being not available for the purpose, the brother should step into his place. No third person should be relied on in the matter.” Again, “In agriculture he who works himself is sure to get much profit, while he who simply does the work of supervision gets only half the profit. But he who is lazy enough to stay at home and enquire about his cultivation from there as a third person is sure to lose in the concern.” This caution shows that the peasantry of Bengal had no idea of organised labour. ‘Dheñki’ or the rice-husking pedal was once considered as an indispensable

1

বাপ বেটার চাষ চাই।

তা অভাবে সোদর ভাই ॥

\* \* \* \*

খাটে খাটায় লাভের গাঁধি।

তার অদেক কাঁধে ছাতি ॥

ঘরে ব’সে পুছে, বাত।

তার ঘরে হা ভাত ॥ —খনার বচন।

implement for domestic purposes. The house which did not contain a 'dheñki' was branded as forsaken by good luck.<sup>1</sup> Although the well-known Sanskrit saying "বাণিজ্যে বসতি লক্ষ্মী," etc., has put trade first among the four recognised means of livelihood, the Bengali saying differed from it and dared to give agriculture the first place. Thus :—<sup>2</sup>

"Although it is said, trade gives wealth still there can be no denying the drawbacks of trade, the reason being that in trade people require much capital and take recourse to fraud. Into service, one should not enter, if one has the sense of self-respect in him. Beggary procures no wealth. Evidently it is then agriculture which is the most suitable occupation for a self-respecting person."

In the *Chandikāvya* of *Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām* we learn that the poet though a Brāhmaṇ by caste lived by personally doing the work of cultivation.<sup>3</sup> In the Sanskrit work called *Parāśara-Saṁhitā*, a high place was given to agriculture. Herein advice has been given even to the Brāhmaṇs to carry on agriculture with zeal. "With the paddy cultivated by himself, or acquired from a field cultivated on his behalf,

১                      যাহার ঘরে নাহি ঢেঁকি মূল ।

সে বহুখির নাহিক কুশল ॥ —ডাকের বচন ।

<sup>2</sup> See *Chāṣā-pālā* by Rāmeśwar, C. U. MS. No. 2455, Fol. 3 See also F. 1 and 2.

<sup>3</sup> See *Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām's Chandikāvya*, p. 22 (C. U. ed.) :—

“সহর সেলিমাবাজ      তাহাতে সজ্জন রাজ

নিবসে নিউগী গোপীনাথ ।

তাহার তালুকে বসি      দাশিষ্ঠায় চাষ চাষি

নিবাস পুরুষ ছয় সাত ॥”

(In the town of Selimābāj lives the good man Gopīnāth Niugi. I live in his Tālūq and my village is Dāmīnyā. We are here for six or seven generations and our profession is agriculture.)

he should offer the five sacrifices (enjoined in the works on Smṛti) and should likewise be engaged in celebrating the sacrificial rites such as the Veda prescribes (the five sacrifices are mentioned by Manu, in Ch. 3, St. 70).''<sup>1</sup>

*Astrology in Agriculture :—*

The Bengali cultivators have been the tillers of the soil from hoary past with the aid of astrological observations. It is not exactly known how or whence this knowledge has come into the possession of the Bengali people, but this much may be surmised that the tradition points to a foreign origin.

Not only in old Bengali sayings but also in Sanskrit works such as 'Kṛṣi-Parāśara' we have evidence of astrological belief being always associated with agricultural operations. The śloka given in the footnote refer to peculiar situation of the planets as bringing scarcity and drought seen during the rainy season.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institutes of Parāśara—translated into English by K. K. Bhaṭṭācāryya, Second Chapter (Bibliotheca Indica).

স্বয়ংকৃষ্টে তথা ক্ষেত্রে  
ধাত্মৈশ্চ স্বয়মর্জিতৈঃ ।  
নির্বপেৎ পঞ্চ যজ্ঞাংশ্চ  
ক্রতু দীক্ষাঞ্চ কারয়েৎ ॥ —প<sup>১</sup> স<sup>১</sup> ৬।২ ।

Again,

ষট্ কৰ্মসহিতো বিপ্রঃ কৃষিকৰ্ম চ কারয়েৎ ।

—প<sup>১</sup> স<sup>১</sup> ২।২ ।

<sup>2</sup> “কুজপৃষ্ঠগতোভানুঃ সমুদ্রমপি শোষণয়েৎ ।  
সত্ত্বো নিকৃন্তয়েদ্দৃষ্টং চিত্রামধ্যগতো ভৃগুঃ ॥” অপিচ,  
“অঙ্গারকো যদা সিংহে তদাঙ্গারময়ী মহী ।  
স এব রবিনা যুক্তঃ সমুদ্রমপি শোষণয়েৎ ॥” —কৃষিপরাশরঃ ।

Innumerable pithy sayings are often recited by the illiterate Bengali peasants showing their knowledge in the rudiments of astrology, although the meanings of the sayings are not always clear. A few specimens are given below from Khanār Vachan by way of illustration.<sup>1</sup>

(a) If there be much rain and consequent overflowing of the country in the Bengali month of Śrāvan (July-August) and drought in the next month of Bhādra (August-September), if there be again rains submerging the lands under water though not to an excess in Āświn (September-October) and much rain without strong wind in Kārtik (October-November), then surely abundant paddy crop will grow in the fields that year.

(b) When according to astrological calculations, in any particular year, Saturn occupies the highest position and Mars is next to him, then agriculture will not flourish that year.

(c) Says Khanā, “The cotton which is grown in the month of Kārtik (October-November) yields in abundance.”

<sup>1</sup> The Bengali months as represented here through the names of the figures of the zodiac have interesting similarity with the astrological expressions of the agricultural people of the Malabar side in the Deccan.

See “Economic Life in a Malabar Village,” pp. 162-163 by J. Subbrama Aiyar.

(a) করকট ছরকট সিংহ স্রুকা কস্তা কানে কান ।

বিনা বায়ে বর্ষে তুলা কোথা রাখিবি ধান ॥

(b) শনি রাজা মঙ্গল পাত্র ।

চষ খোড় কেবল মাত্র ॥

(c) শুন ভাই খনা বলে ।

তুলায় তুলা অধিক ফলে ॥ —খনা ।

(d) If the planet Mercury be ascendant, and Venus be next to him then no doubt the fields will be overfull with crops.

(e) Bananas may be taken throughout the year with the exception of the Bengali months of Bhādra (August-September) and Chaitra (March-April).

The above lines are only a few out of many in which directions about agriculture are given in the technical phraseology of astrology.

### *Customs and Superstitions :—*

Next to astrology, the customs and superstitions of the country play an important part in agriculture. Without ignoring their value we are rather prone to think that they are not altogether useless, as many of them give the result of accumulated wisdom of many generations. Thus, following Khanā, it is believed that sowing paddy seeds within the first five days of the month of Āṣāḍh (May-June) will yield much crop.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless according to the same authority sowing is recommended throughout the month of Śrāvaṇ (July-August) and the first 12 days of the next month.<sup>2</sup> Similarly the pulse 'Kalāi' is to be sown either in the last four days of Bhādra (August-Septem-

(d) বৃহ রাজা শুক্র মন্ত্রী যদি হয় ।

শস্ত হবে ক্ষেত্র পুরা নাহিক সংশয় ॥ —খনা ।

(e) সিংহ মীন বর্জে ।

কলা খাবে আজ্যে ॥ —খনা ।

<sup>1</sup> আষাঢ়ের পঞ্চদিনে রোপয়ে যে ধান ।

হুখে থাকে কৃষি বল বাড়য়ে সম্মান ॥ —খনা ।

<sup>2</sup> শ্রাবণের পুরো ভাদ্রের বারো ।

এর মধ্যে যত পার ॥ —খনা ।

ber) or within the first four days of Āświn (September-October) which are taken to be auspicious.<sup>1</sup> Another variety of pulse known as 'Maṭar-Kalāi' is to be sown throughout the months of Āświn (September-October) and Kārtik (October-November) except the last nineteen days of the former and the first nineteen days of the latter month for getting a full harvest.<sup>2</sup> 'Tila' (sesamum) is to be sown either within the last eight days of Fālgun (February-March) or within the first eight days of Chaitra (March-April).<sup>3</sup>

Of course the value of these directions may be underestimated at the outset but a close study of the change of weather conditions and seasons will prove that the days thus recommended for sowing have generally some bearing on it. The peasantry have arrived at these conclusions after a close observation of the conditions of the soil in different weathers and different seasons. The sanctity attached to particular days of the week for sowing seeds, from whatever causes they may have originated, are totally without any scientific basis. There are some superstitions of which a scientific explanation may be traced,—“He who cultivates the soil in the days of the full moon and the new moon is sure to suffer misery. His cows suffer from rheumatism, and scarcity prevails in his house. According to Khanā, he who tills land in these two prohibited

১. ভাদ্রের চারি আশ্বিনের চারি ।

কলাই রোব যত পারি ॥ —খনা ।

২. আশ্বিনের উনিশ, কার্তিকের উনিশ ।

বাদ দিয়ে যত পারিস মটর কলাই বুনিশ ॥ —খনা ।

৩. ফাল্গুনের আট চৈত্রের আট ।

সেই তিল দায়ে কাট ॥ —খনা ।



days is ruined.”<sup>1</sup> The two forbidden days are generally attended with storm and other inclemencies of the weather in Bengal. But “even the mighty king Rāvaṇa was killed with all his family by planting bananas in the month of Bhādra (August-September)”<sup>2</sup> seems to be a vain threat.

Again, “the peasants are to start for the fields on an auspicious day. There should be no inauspicious things to be seen on the way. Just reaching the field they have to enter it by the eastern side and begin ploughing from thence.” It is said, “all prosperity will smile on the peasants if they begin tilling from the eastern side of the field.”<sup>3</sup> Similarly in collecting the harvest the southern side should be taken as the side for beginning work.<sup>4</sup>

Like the cultivators of Europe the Bengali peasants observe the ceremony of harvest-gathering called Navāṇṇa

<sup>1</sup> পূর্ণিমা অমাবস্তায় যে ধরে হাল ।  
তার দুঃখ চিরকাল ॥  
তার বলদের হয় বাত ।  
ঘরে তার না থাকে ভাত ॥  
থনা বলে আমার বাণী ।  
যে চম্বে তার হবে হানি ॥ —থনা ।

<sup>2</sup> ভাদ্রমাসে রুয়ে কলা ।  
সবংশে মলো রাবণ শালা ॥ —থনা ।

<sup>3</sup> শুভক্ষণ দেখে ক’রবে যাত্রা ।  
পথে যেন না হয় অন্তঃ বাতী ॥  
আগে গিয়া করো দিক্ নিরূপণ ।  
পূর্বদিক্ হ’তে কর হল চালন ॥  
যা কিছু আশা পূর্বে সকল ।  
নাহি সংশয় হবে সফল ॥

See the song of Siva by Ramāi Paṇḍit.

with much merry-making. It is celebrated in the month of Agrahāyana (November-December) or Pauṣa (December-January) when the winter paddy crop is gathered. References of Navānna (*lit.*, new-rice ceremony) in the old Bengali literature are profuse. In the various 'Vāramāsis' we learn of Navānna which exists even to-day.<sup>1</sup>

Besides Navānna, 'Hala-Pravāha' or the 'First tilling ceremony' is another ceremony in connection with agriculture. Thus in Rāmeśwar's Chāṣā-pālā,<sup>2</sup> we learn, after a brief shower in the latter part of the month of Māgha (January-February), this ceremony was held in an auspicious time. As these ceremonies are still observed their dates of celebration are to be found in the annual Bengali almanacs.

In the story of Maluā (Mymensingh Ballads) we learn of a ceremony at the time of one's going out for sickle-work during harvest time. Thus, when Chānd Binod, the hero of the poem, was going out to the field for the above purpose his mother, "brought a sharp sickle and put it in the hands of her son bidding him at the time start for the fields for cutting the crops. Besides taking the sickle with him Chānd Binod took five sheaves from the Bātā grove and proceeded to the fields singing the Vāramāsi songs.<sup>3</sup>

### *Agricultural Implements :—*

The agricultural implements though primitive and very commonplace, were even subjects of poetic effusions of some of our old writers such as Ramāi Paṇḍit and Rāmeśwar,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Maluā (Mymensingh Ballads).

<sup>2</sup> See Chāṣā-pālā by Rāmeśwar, C.U. MS. No. 2455, F. 11.

<sup>3</sup> See Maluā (Mymensingh Ballads), Bengali Version, p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> See the song of Śiva by Ramāi Paṇḍit and Chāṣā-pālā by Rāmeśwar, C.U. MS. No. 2455, F. 4, 8 and 9.

and as such we find elaborate descriptions of the making of such implements as :—

- (a) লাঙ্গল—yoke,
- (b) জলুই—a pin or nail,
- (c) ফাল—a plough-share,
- (d) দা—a cleaver,
- (e) কাস্তে—a sickle,
- (f) পাসি—a frame,
- (g) মই—a ladder,
- (h) পাঁচন বাড়ি—a stick,
- (i) টেঁকি—a rice-husking pedal,

besides various other implements in connection with agriculture.

No doubt the services of the village blacksmith and the village carpenter have to be requisitioned for the purpose. In the Chāṣā-pālā of Rāmeśwar a vivid, though rather exaggerated, description of the making of these implements are found.

#### *Weather :—*

Like astrological prognostications the people were once very fond of weather forecasts which were based on more or less practical observations, and as a consequence the results were surprisingly accurate. The peasant-folk got by heart the sayings of the cultivators' manual—the 'Khanār Vachan'—and became accustomed to quote the lines about the observation of nature in their everyday life or field work. As a result of this, the people in general became trained in the study of weather conditions without the guidance of a costly Government Department. In a country where agriculture on a large scale based on scientific lines is unknown such simple methods are useful to the people, working as

they do frequently under the freaks of nature in the tropical climate of Bengal.

The truth of the sayings will be evident from the following examples taken from the sayings of Khanā :—

(a) If there be less cold in the winter month of Pauṣa (December-January) and more cold in the summer month of Baiśākh (April-May), then there will be heavy rains in the beginning of Āśādh (May-June) and excessive drought in the month of Śrāvaṇ (June-July).

(b) If rainbow is seen in the eastern sky during the rainy season, surely there will be too much rain and consequent over-flooding of the land.

(c) If in one year the climate is cold in Chaitra (March-April), hail-storm in Baiśākh (April-May) and clear sky (with stars distinctly visible in the firmament at night) in Jyaiṣṭha (May-June) then in that year the flood will come late in the last part of the rainy season.

(d) Why are you so much absorbed in calculation, O father-in-law, you will be able to forecast rains simply at

- (a) পৌষে গরমি বৈশাখে জাড়া ।  
প্রথম আষাড়ে ভরবে গাড়া ॥ —খনা ।
- (b) পূর্বেতে উঠিল কাঁড় ।  
ডান্ধা ডোবা একাকার ॥ —খনা ।
- (c) চৈত্রেতে খর খর ।  
বৈশাখে ঝড় পাধর ॥  
জ্যৈষ্ঠেতে তারা ফুটে ।  
তবে জানবে বর্ষা বটে ॥ —খনা ।
- (d) কি কর খণ্ডর লেখা জোখা ।  
মেঘেই বুঝবে জলের লেখা ॥

the sight of the clouds. The patches of clouds (tech. cumulus) that are floating, with intermittent breeze at the same time, will tell you about the imminent rains. Under the circumstances you may unhesitatingly advise the cultivators to go to the fields to make necessary preparations for raising the ridges to hold water. It may not rain to-day but you may surely expect it to-morrow.

(e) The rainbow in the western sky will bring drought but the rainbow in the eastern sky will fetch rains.

(f) The frequent croaking of frogs is a sure sign of immediate rains.

(g) When in the beginning of the Bengali year Baisākh (April-May) the wind blows from the north-east, you may be sure of heavy rains that year—says Khanā.

(h) The days of the winter month of Pausa (December-January) which will be full of mist will be exactly equal with the days of the summer month of Baisākh (April-May) which will be in rains. When there is rain on

কোদালে-কুড়ুলে মেঘের গা ।

মধ্যে মধ্যে দিচ্ছে বা' ॥

বল্গে চাষায় বাঁধতে আল ।

আজ না হয় হবে কাল ॥ —খনা ।

(e) পশ্চিমে ধনু নিত্য থরা ।

পূবের ধনু বর্ষে ঝড়া ॥ —খনা ।

(f) বেঙ ডাকে ঘন ঘন ।

শীঘ্র বৃষ্টি হবে জান ॥ —খনা ।

(g) বৎসরের প্রথম ঈশানে বয় ।

সে বৎসর বর্ষা হবে খনায় কয় ॥ —খনা ।

(h) পৌষের কুয়া বৈশাখের ফল ।

ষ'দিন কুয়া ত'দিন জল ॥ —খনা ।

Saturday it will continue for a week. When it will rain on Tuesday it will go on for three days. In other days it will end on the very day when it will begin to rain.

(i) If in any day of the month of Bhādra (August-September) there be clouds moving in the sky and the wind blowing at random from different directions, then, on that day heavy rains are expected.

(j) If there be rains in the month of Agrahāyana (November-December) then famine is apprehended due to the destruction of crops through the locusts. So very keen the want becomes that even the king goes out a-begging.

(k) If there be rains in the winter month of Pauṣa (December-January) the paddy falls off early from the stalks as a result of which so much scarcity prevails in the land that even husks of paddy sell dear.

(l) If there be rains in the latter part of Māgha (January-February) praise be to the king and his happy land as the Ravi crop will grow abundantly.

(i) শনির সাত মঙ্গলের তিন ।  
আর সব দিন দিন ॥ —খনা ।  
ভাদ্ররে যেঘ বিপরীত বায় ।  
সে দিন বুষ্টি কে ঘোচায় ॥ —খনা ।

(j) যদি বর্ষে আগনে ।  
রাজা যান মাগনে ॥ —খনা ।

(k) যদি বর্ষে পৌষে ।  
কড়ি হয় তুষে ॥ —খনা ।

(l) যদি বর্ষে মাঘের শেষে ।  
ধন্য রাজা পুণ্য দেশ ॥ —খনা ।

(m) If there be shower in Fālgun (February-March) then the crops 'Chinā' and 'Kāon' are abundantly expected.

(n) If there be drought in the month of Jyaisṭha (May-June) and heavy rains in Āṣāḍh (June-July) surely there will be crops to such a quantity that the earth will hardly be able to sustain the burden.

(o) If it rains in Māgha (January-February) the people become very rich as the rains are conducive to the growth of crops.

(p) The drought of Jyaisṭha (May-June) and the flood of Āṣāḍh (June-July) make the land bear abundant crops.

(q) If it rain in Māgha (January-February) even the unfertile uplands will bear ample paddy crop.

(r) If there be showers in Chaitra (March-April) it is quite favourable for the growth of paddy.

(m) যদি বর্ষে ফাল্গুনে ।

চিনা কাউন দ্বিগুণে ॥ —খনা ।

(n) জ্যৈষ্ঠে শুকো আষাঢ়ে ধরা ।

শস্ত্রের ভার না সহে ধরা ॥ —খনা ।

(o) মাঘ মাসে বর্ষে দেবা ।

রাজা ছেড়ে প্রজার সেবা ॥ --খনা ।

(p) জ্যৈষ্ঠে মারে আষাঢ়ে ভরে ।

কাটিয়া মারিয়া ঘর করে ॥ —খনা ।

(q) যদি বর্ষে মকরে ।

ধান হবে টেকরে ॥ —খনা ।

(r) যদি হয় চৈত্রে বৃষ্টি ।

তবে হবে ধানের সৃষ্টি ॥ —খনা ।

(s) If the sky of the full-moon night of Kārtik (October-November) is cloudless and there is strong wind the Ravi crop is expected in abundance. Cloud and rains in that night indicate injury to the crop altogether.

(t) In the rainy season, if the weather is cloudy at night, and water increases at the time, the paddy crop will be destroyed through excessive water.

(u) If in the rainy month of Āṣāḍha (June-July) of any year heavy shower occurs in the ninth quarter of the full-moon—there will be drought in that year. If there be very little rain during this month fishes may be had in abundance. If there be moderate rains in that month surely the earth will bear good crops. If in any evening of Āṣāḍha (June-July) the sun goes down shedding brilliant lustre no crop is expected that year.

- (s) কার্তিক পূর্ণিমা করো আশা ।  
 খনা বলে ডেকে শোন্‌রে চাষা ॥  
 নিশ্চল মেঘে যদি বাত বয় ।  
 রবিখণ্ডের ভার ধরণী না সয় ॥ —খনা ।
- (t) মেঘ করে রাত্রে আর হয় জল !  
 তবে জেন মাঠে যাওরাই বিফল ॥ —খনা ।
- (u) আষাঢ়ে নবমী শুকুল পখা ।  
 কি কর খন্ডুর লেখা জোখা ॥  
 যদি বর্ষে মুষল ধারে ।  
 মধ্য সমুদ্রে বগা চরে ॥  
 যদি বর্ষে ছিটে ফোঁটা ।  
 পর্কতে হয় মীনের ঘটা ॥  
 যদি বর্ষে ঝিমি ঝিমি ।  
 শস্ত্রের ভার না সয় মেদিনী ॥  
 হেসে চাকি বসে পাটে ।  
 শস্ত্র সে বার না হয় মোটে ॥ —খনা ।



(v) If the southern wind blows throughout the month of Āṣāḍh (June-July) from the beginning, no doubt the year will see much flood.

(w) When in one year there will be mist in the month of Chaitra (March-April) and flood in the month of Bhādra (August-September) the death rate of the people will appreciably increase.

(x) The Brāhmaṇs, the rains and the flood—all go away on getting ‘Dakṣiṇā’ (fees). (There is a pun on the word ‘Dakṣiṇā.’ In connection with the first it means priestly fees while in connection with the second and third it means the southern wind.) In plain language the Brāhmaṇs leave a house after getting their priestly fees while the rain and the flood leave the land of Bengal on the approach of the southern wind.

#### *Manuring and Curing of Crops :—*

The peasantry being accustomed to their work naturally know well how to manure the soil properly for growing good crops and cure them of any malady detrimental to their natural growth by applying various indigenous methods within their easy reach, when they are in need of such steps. The law of nature which inculcates what is injurious to human life is conducive to the preservation of plant-life, has long been known to them as the expression, “Those

(v) পূর্ণ আষাঢ়ে দক্ষিণা বায় ।

সেই বৎসর বড়া হয় ॥ —খনা ।

(w) চৈত্রে কুয়া ভাদ্রে বান ।

নরের মৃত্যু গড়াগড়ি বান ॥ —খনা ।

(x) বায়ুন বাদল বান ।

দক্ষিণা পেলেই বান ॥ —খনা ।

things (e.g., rotten cowdung) which injure men cure the plants”<sup>1</sup> clearly illustrate.

The following examples from the ‘Khanār Vachan’ will show the lines by which the cultivators manure and cure the crops of any disease from time immemorial. In the countryside the indigenous methods are followed with advantage and the knowledge—the outcome of experience of many years—is handed down from father to son.

(a) If some water, in which a fish has been washed, are poured at the root of a gourd plant, then the plant will surely be benefited from it.

(b) The land which contains rotten paddy as manure is fit for the rearing of chillis.

(c) The smut of corn (paddy) should be thrown into the bamboo-grove. If this is done, the result will be a very rapid increase of the grove. Earth should also be thrown beneath a bamboo-grove to serve the purpose of manure.

(d) Betelnut plants require cowdung (liquid manure) as manure for their growth.

<sup>1</sup> মাহুষ মরে ঝাড়ে, গাছলা সারে তাতে । —খনা

(a) লাউ গাছে মাছের জল । —খনা ।

(b) খেনো মাটিতে বাড়ে ঝাল ॥ —খনা ।

(c) শুন বাপু চাষার বেটা ।

বাঁশের ঝাড়ে দিও ধানের চিটা ॥

দিলে চিটা বাঁশের গোড়ে ।

তুই কুড়া তুই বেড়বে ঝাড়ে ॥ —খনা ।

\* \* \* \*

(d) গোয়ে গোবরে বাঁশে মাটা । —খনা

(e) When brinjals are attacked by the insects kitchen ashes should be used to counteract them. There is no other remedy better than this.

(f) Palmyra-trees yield fruits after twelve years. They will not do so if their leaves are eaten by cows prematurely.

(g) The banana plants should be grown eight cubits apart. In no case their leaves should be taken away. If this advice is followed there will be no fear of ample subsistence.

(h) Pieces of rotten straw or chips of wood should be used as manure at the roots of arums (গুল).

(i) The edible arums (মান) will thrive if ashes are used at their roots.

(j) The plants of 'Māndār' (*Erythrina Fulgens*) should be reared in orchard of the betelnut plants. The leaves of the former falling beneath the latter help the rapid growth of the nuts. This recourse is very effective for the betelnut plants.

(e) বেগুন—ধরলে পোকা দিবে ছাই।

এর চেয়ে ভাল উপায় নাই ॥ —খনা।

(f) বার বছরে ফলে তাল।

যদি না লাগে গরুর নাল ॥ —খনা।

(g) নালে কাস্তে গজেক বাই।

কলা রুয়ে খেয়ো ভাই। — খনা।

(h) & (i) ওলে কুটী মানে ছাই। —খনা।

(j) শোন্নে বাপু চাষার পো।

জুপারি বাগে মান্দার রো ॥ —খনা।

মান্দার পাভা পল্লৈ গোড়ে।

ফল বাড়ে ঝটপট কোরে ॥ —খনা।

(k) Some roots should be cut up if no cocoanut-fruit is forthcoming. If soil mixed up with salt is put at the base of a cocoanut tree then it soon yields fruits. If the smut of corn is used at the roots of a cocoanut plant then not only it becomes very plump in appearance but also bears fruit early.

(l) If the young plants of cocoanut and betelnut are removed from the place where they first were planted these plants get more strength and grow rapidly. But different are the results with the mango and the jack-fruit trees under similar conditions, as the former will then yield fruits of smaller size and the latter will yield very few fruits.

The following observations of Khanā regarding various crops deserve our notice :—

(a) It is the rains which make the soil fit for cultivation—properly known as kāḍān. When the soil is thus

(k) অফলা নারিকেলের শিকর কাটি ।

\* \* \* \* \*

নারিকেল গাছে দিলে লুণ মাটি ।

শীঘ্র শীঘ্র কাটে গুটী ॥

\* \* \* \* \*

খনা ডাকিয়ে বলে ।

চিটা দিলে নারিকেল-মূলে ॥

গাছ হয় তাজা মোটা ।

শীঘ্র শীঘ্র ধরে গোটা ॥ —খনা ।

(l) গে নারিকেল নেড়ে পো ।

আনটুচুরে কাঁটাল ভে ॥—(i.e., ভোয়া) ? —খনা ।

(a) আষাঢ়ে কাড়ান নামকে ।

প্রাৰ্ণে কাড়ান ধানকে ॥

made fertile in Āṣādh (*i.e.*, June-July), the paddy will not grow adequately. If the soil is made fertile in Srāvaṇ (*i.e.*, July-August), the paddy will grow in profusion. In Bhādra (*i.e.*, August-September) the late rains will be injurious to the growth of paddy. In Āświn (*i.e.*, September-October) the land in spite of its fertility due to the rains will bear no crops.

(b) When there will be enough mangoes growing in one year, paddy will also be growing in abundance. Similarly, when in one year the tamarind will be growing in plenty, there will be excessive flood occurring in the land, during the rains.

(c) If the tuft of paddy is thick then the outturn of paddy will be great. The more wide the paddy plants will be sown the more will be the yield of crop.

(d) Cut the paddy after thirty days from the day when the ear of corn before it shoots from the culm will first begin to develop. When the paddy will first flower cut the corn after twenty days from that time. When the sheafs will bend, cut the corn after thirteen days. If a cultivator delays more he will lose.

ভাদ্রে কাড়ান শীঘ্রকে ।

আখিনে কাড়ান কিসকে ॥ —খনা ।

(b) আমে ধান ।

তুঁতুলে বান ॥ —খনা ।

(c) কোল পাতলা ডাগর শুছি ।

লক্ষী বলেন এখানে আছি ॥ —খনা ।

(d) ধোর তিরিশে ।

ফুলো বিশে ॥

ঘোড়া মুখো তেরো জেনো ।

বুধে হুধে কাটো ধান ॥ —খনা ।

(e) Water of the rainy season subsides in Kārtik (October-November). The less the water in this month the more the paddy.

(f) If the paddy is cut in Agrahāyan (*i.e.*, November-December) then full crop is available. If it is done in Pauṣ (*i.e.*, December-January) even less than half (*lit.* six annas) will be gathered. If it is done in Māgh (*i.e.*, January-February) no crop will be found in the field as there will remain only the straw. In Fālgun (*i.e.*, February-March) even that also will not be found.

(g) The light fortnight is conducive to the growth of rice plants provided the field is sloping towards the south. In that case much crop is expected to the satisfaction of the people.

(h) The mustard :—

The proper time for sowing mustard is at the end of

e) কার্তিকের ঊন জলে ।

থনা বলে ছন ফলে ॥ —থনা ।

(f) আশ্বিনে পৌটি ।

পৌষে ছেউটি ॥

মাঘে নাড়া ।

ফাল্গুনে ফাঁড়া ॥ —থনা ।

(g) আধার পরে চাঁদের কলা ।

কতক কালা কতক ধলা ॥

উত্তর উ চো দক্ষিণ কাত ।

ধারায় ধারায় ধানের ধাত ॥

চলে ধান ছই সতা ।

মিষ্টি হবে লোকের কথা ॥ —থনা ।

(h) থনা বলে চাষার পো ।

শরতের শেষে সরিষা রো ॥

সরষে ঘন, পাতলা রাই । —থনা ।

autumn. The mustard should be sown very close but its variety, the rape seed (*Sinapis racemosa*) should be sown rather apart.

(i) The pulses :—

The peas (Kalāi) or kidney bean, (*Phaseolus mungo*, i.e., Mug) may be sown in the same field where mustard was first sown. Both will then grow in abundance to the joy of the cultivator.

(j) The radish—the cotton—the betel-leaf (Pān) :—

The ground should be ploughed at least sixteen times to grow the radish. So considerable pains and patience are required for it.<sup>1</sup>

Cotton is grown if the ground is ploughed eight times and paddy requires the ground to be ploughed four times only. The betel leaves require no ploughing at all.

The betel-vine should be planted at the latter part of July and another July should be allowed to pass. At the end of third July one may expect to have plentiful leaves of the plant. So though no cultivation is necessary, caution should be taken to watch the growth of the plant for full

(i) সরিষা বনে কলাই মুগ ।

বুনে বেড়াও চাপড়ে বুক ॥ —খনা ।

(j) ষোল চাষে মূলা ।

তার অর্ধেক তুলা ॥

তার অর্ধেক ধান ।

বিনা চাষে পান ॥ —খনা ।

<sup>1</sup> The soil should be powdered to dust by repeated ploughing (lit. sixteen times) to grow the radish as we learn in the saying of Khana,—"মূলার ভূঁই ধূলা," i.e., dust is the proper soil for the growth of radishes.

two years. Khanā further says that the betel-leaves grow well in a shady place.<sup>1</sup>

(k) The Cotton and Jute :—

The cotton plants should remain wide apart in such a way that cotton may be plucked easily standing in the midst of them or the plants may be crossed at pleasure. The jute plants and the cotton plants should not be planted in the same field as the former require sufficient water for its growth while the latter will die out if water reaches them.

(l) The maize :—

Maizes were once sold at a very high price in Bengal. Khanā says, “ If you want to earn money then sow maizes in the month of Chaitra (March-April). ”

(m) Tobacco :—

The soil should be beaten into fine dust before tobacco is planted. Do not plant the little plants very closely and

<sup>1</sup> তিন শায়নে পান ॥

পান পেতে শাবনে ।

খেয়ে না ফুরোয় রাবণে ॥

• • • •

বিনা চাষে পান ।

• • • •

ছায়ায় পান রোদে ধান । —খনা ।

(k) নেঙ্গে নেঙ্গে কাপাস চাই ।

কাপাস বলে, কোটা ভাই ।

জ্ঞাতি পানি না যেন পাই ॥ —খনা ।

(l) যদি থাকে টাকা করিবার পৌ ।

তবে চৈত্র মাসে ভুট্টা রো ॥ —খনা ।

(m) তামাক বুনে শুঁড়িয়া মাটি ।

বীজ পুতো গুটি গুটি ॥



reap the crop not later than December or early part of January at the utmost.

(n) The “Āuś” paddy requires sandy soil and the jute crop requires clayey soil.

(o) Chilli :—

The chillis should be planted when they are very young. Khanā says, “Let these be planted by October ; but if the peasant idly passes away the season and plants chillis so late as in November or in December, the plants become too big and liable to be eaten up by worms.”

(p) Turmeric :—

The turmeric should be planted in Baiśākh (April-May), Jyaisṭha (May-June), when one should not idly pass time in indoor games. Clear the soil of weeds in Āṣāḍh

ঘন ঘন পুতৌ না ।

পৌষের অধিক রেখ না ॥ —খনা ।

(n) আউশের ভূঁই বেলে ।

পাটের ভূঁই আটালে ॥ —খনা ।

(o) ভাদ্র আখিনে না রুয়ে ঝাল ।

ষে চাষা ঘুমায়ে কাটার কাল ॥

পরেতে কার্তিক আঘণ মাসে ।

বুড়ো গাছ ক্ষেতে পুতিয়া আসে ॥

সে গাছ মরিবে ধরিয়া ওলা ।

পূরিতে হবে না ঝালের গোলা ॥ —খনা ।

(p) বৈশাখে জ্যৈষ্ঠতে হলুদ রোও ।

দাবা পাসা খেলা ফেলিয়ে ধৌও ॥

আষাঢ় শ্রাবণে নিড়ায়ে মাটি ।

ভাদ্রেরে নিড়ায়ে করহ খাঁটি ॥

অস্ত্র নিয়মে পুতলে হলদি ।

পৃথিবী বলে তাতে কি ফল দি ॥ —খনা

(June-July) and Śrāvaṇ (July-August) and then sow in Bhādra (August-September). If you do not follow this principle you will suffer.

(q) *Arum Indicum* (মান) and Sesamum :—

If one desires to have *Arum Indicum* then prepare the ground with a spade. But for growing the sesamum regular ploughing will be required. The white sesamum should be sown in Āświn (September-October) or in Kārtik (October-November). • The black sesamum should be sown in Fālgun (February-March).

(r) *Trichosanthes dioeca* (পটোল) :—

One should sow the above vegetable in a soil which is sandy. This vegetable will then grow abundantly.

(s) The esculent root or the arum (ওল) should be sown in the hot month of Fālgun (February-March) as otherwise it will be as worthless as the wild arum. It should not be sown in a shady place as in that case it will taste bad causing an itching sensation. But in one sense

(q) কোদালে মান তিলে হাল ।

কাতেন ফাকার মাসে কাল ॥ —থনা ।

(r) শুনরে বাপু চাষার বেটা ।

মাটির মধ্যে বেলে যেটা ॥

তাতে যদি বুনি পটোল ।

তাতেই তোর আশা সফল ॥ —থনা ।

(s) ফাস্তনে না রয়ে ওল ।

শেষে হয় গণ্ড গোল ॥

ছায়ার ওলে চুলকায় মুখ ।

কিন্তু তাহে নাহি হয় দুখ ॥

নদীর ধারে পুতলে কচু ।

কচু হয় তিন হাত নীচু ॥ —থনা ।

the producer will gain as it will be very big in size so fetching better price. The roots of another kind of esculent root (কচু) when sown by the river-side, will have the proper growth (*lit.* three cubits in length).

(t) *Cucurbita lagenaria* :—

The long-gourd plants (*Cucurbita lagenaria*) should be reared in that part of a house where ashes are thrown, and the chilli plants should be grown in the courtyard.

(u) The brinjals :—

The brinjals (*Solanum melongena*) may be sown throughout the year save and except the Bengali months of Baisākh and Jyais̥ṭha (April-May and May-June).

(v) If the cocoanut fruits are gathered every now and then, fruits may be had in larger numbers. Quite opposite is the principle with the bamboo grove. The less the bamboos are cut down the more will be the growth of the grove.

(w) The bananas :—

Among the fruit-trees the banana plants like the cocoanut trees occupy a prominent position. In fact very great

(t) ছায়ে লাউ উঠানে ঝাল ।  
করো বাপু চাষার ছাওয়াল ॥ —খনা ।

(u) বলে গেছে বরাহের বৌ ।  
দশটি মাস বেগুন রো ॥  
চৈত্র বৈশাখ দিবে বাদ ।  
হবে নাই কোন বিবাদ ॥ —খনা ।

(v) দাতার নারিকেল বখিলের বাঁশ ।  
কমে না বাড়ে বারো মাস ॥ —খনা ।

(w) কলা লাগাবে মায়ে পুতে ।  
কলা লাগিয়ে না কাটো পাত ।  
তাতেই কাপড় তাতেই ভাত ॥

interest centres round the banana plants. Every Bengali house, whether Hindu or Mahomedan, almost invariably possesses some banana plants. These are useful in every way like the cocoanut trees. The bananas are taken with relish by all classes of people. The plant's skin is burnt to form ashes for cleaning purposes in place of soaps, in the countryside. The plant is held auspicious during religious and festive occasions when they are placed before the principal doorways.

From a perusal of the "Khanār Vachan" it seems apparent that with the banana plants people carried on a lucrative profession in the past.

<sup>1</sup>The bananas should be planted by the mother and her sons. (It should not be left to other hands who may do the work carelessly.) If no less than three hundred and sixty plants are grown, then one need not be anxious for

কলা কয়ে খেয়ো ভাই,  
তিন শত ষাট ঝাড় কলা কয়ে ।  
ধাক গৃহী ঘরে শুয়ে ॥  
কয়ে কলা না কাট পাত ।  
তাতেই কাপড় তাতেই ভাত ॥  
ফাল্গুনে এঁটে ।  
পোত কেটে ।  
বৈধে যাবে ঝাড়কি ঝাড় ।  
কলা বইতে ভাঙ্গবে ঘাড় ॥  
ডাক ছেড়ে বলে রাবণ ।  
কলা রোবে অ ষাট শ্রাবণ ॥  
কবি বটে খাবিনে ।  
কলা তলায় যাবিনে ॥  
লেগে যাবে ভুঁয়ে ।  
কলা পড়বে শুয়ে ॥

the maintenance of his family. One should not cut the leaves from the young plants. It will then yield abundant bananas to supply both the food and the clothing of the householder. Cut the thick banana root and plant the same in rows in the month of Phālgun (February-March). Then plants will grow from the offshoots in large numbers yielding a large quantity of fruits. The time for planting is the rainy months of Āṣāḍh (May-June) and Śrāvaṇ (June-July).

According to some these two months (Āṣāḍh and Śrāvaṇ) are not the proper time to plant the banana trees, as in that case the worms will eat them up. So these two months are to be avoided. The best time for planting bananas is the month of Phālgun (February-March). Then the trees will yield monthly fruits.

In every case of orchard-making it is essential that the banana plants should be grown first.

Paddy (*Oryza sativa*) :—

The staple crop of Bengal being paddy it requires more than a passing notice. The types of paddy were so numerous that it is difficult to exhaust all the names. Still an attempt is being made here in this direction. Ramāi Paṇḍit's statement that the species of paddy are no less

যদি রোপ ফাল্গুনে কলা ।

তবে হয় মাস সফলা ॥

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আগে পুতে কলা ।

বাগ-বাগিচে ফলা ॥ —খনা ।

A list of the fruit-trees that were planted by the Bengalis in the old days, will be found in the description of the Garden-house (Guā-bāḍi) of Chand the merchant in the *Manasā-mangal* poems.

than “a thousand in number,” though seems to be exaggerated, is nevertheless true.<sup>1</sup>

The following names of different kinds of paddy are found in the Sūnya Purān of Ramāi Paṇḍit :—

(1) জৌধান, (2) ছিছিরা, (3) আমলো=Myrobalan, (4) আলাচিত, (5) ফেফেরি=the black rice, (6) সনাথড়কী=Straw-like, (7) দুগ্গাভোগ=Offering for the Goddess Durgā, (8) অগ্নিকল, (9) মুক্তাহার=the pearl necklace, (10) কাল মুগড়=the black club, (11) নাগর যুয়ান=youthful lover, (12) তুলাশালী=cotton-like śālī, (13) অসতা=unchaste, (14) বককড়ী=the white cowry, (15) গৌতমপলাল, (16) পান্দুসিয়া=the faded, (17) ভাদ্দমুখী=the Bhadoi, (18) তুলসধান=the cotton-white paddy, (19) দুধুয়া= milk-white, (20) গুজুরা=Gujrati(?), (21) যোআলি=the yoke-shaped, (22) দাড়=the oar-shaped, (23) হাতি পাঞ্জর=the elephant's rib (in hardness ?), (24) বুড়া মাস্তা=the ripe Datura, (25) হাটিআ, (26) ছটিআ, (27) কআ, (28) তিলসাগরী, (29) লতামৌ=honey of a creeper, (30) মৌকলস=the jar of honey, (31) খেজুর-ছড়ি=the bunch of dates, (32) পবত জীরা=the cumin seed of the mountain, (33) গন্ধ তুলসী=the holy basil (*Ocimum sanctum*), (34) দলাগুড়ি, (35) বন্ধী=the prisoner, (36) বাঁশ-গজা, (37) সীতালালি=the śālī rice bearing the name of Sītā, (38) হুকুলি, (39) হরিকানী, (40) কুসুম শালি=the śālī rice

<sup>1</sup> For various kinds of paddy with details see Agricultural Ledger, 1910, Nos. 1 and 2 (*Oryza sativa*). See also Gallon's Sanskrit Dictionary and the work named Races of Rices in Bengal. Besides see the publications of Commercial Intelligence Department of Government of India, the Viśwakosa and such periodicals as the Kṛṣak. See the Sanskrit work ভাষ্যকোষ. See also the Export Lists of the Port Commissioners, Calcutta.

In the International Agricultural Exhibition of India no less than ten thousand names of paddy were furnished and four thousand specimens shown. In the Museum of Calcutta the authorities have kept four thousand varieties of rice. See for elaborate description of different kinds of paddy the work বঙ্গ চলিত by Santosh Nath Seth. See also Dr. Watt's Economic Dictionary. See also C. Guha's Bengali-English Dictionary.

resembling the beauty and scent of a flower, (41) রক্তশাল = the red śāli, (42) চন্দনশাল = the sandal-scented śāli, (43) রাজদল = the vanquisher of kings, (43) উড়াশালি = the flying śāli (due to lightness), (45) বিক্রাশালি = the śāli rice of the Vindhya region, (46) লাউশালি = the śāli rice resembling a long-gourd, (47) আজানসিঅলি, (48) কালাকান্তিক = the black beauty, (49) মেঘী = resembling the shrub *Trigonella foenugraecus*, (50) খীরকন্ঠা, (51) পছাল, (52) রসজঅ = best taste, (53) কামদ = Bestower at will, (54) খুদুধুরাজ = tiny milk-white grains, (55) জভনা = coming from Java(?), (56) বাঁকই = the bent, (57) মুলা = the radish, (58) পিপীড়া = the ant, (59) ককচি, (60) মাধবলতা = the Mādhavī creeper, (61) বেগুনবীচি = the brinjal seed, (62) কোচীমেটা, (63) রায়গড় = coming from Raygarh(?), (64) তোজনা, (65) আরবোর, (66) কোঙরভোগ = a prince's meal, (67) জলারান্নি = the rice which makes the water red (perhaps after being boiled), (68) কনকচোর = yellow coloured (*lit.* thief of gold), (69) লাল কামিনী = the red-complexioned girl, (70) শোল পনা, (71) পাচ্ছাভোগ = the offering for the Padishahs (the emperors), (72) বুগি, (73) আজানা লক্ষ্মী = the unknown prosperity, (74) বাঁশমতী, (75) পশী, (76) কঁঙদ = bestower at will, (77) গন্ধমালতী = the flower Gandhamālātī (perhaps for similarity in smell), (78) আমপাবন, (79) গয়াবালী = the sand of Gaya, (80) পাথরা = stony, (81) মাসিলোট, (82) বিক্রাশাল = the śāli rice resembling *Luffa acutangula*, (83) সমধুনা, (84) স্ত্রাসন = the comfortable seat, (85) টাঙ্গন, (86) হরি = bearing the name of the god Hari (Viṣṇu), (87) মহীপাল = Mahīpāl (the celebrated Pāla king?), (88) বাঁকশাল = the bent śāli rice, (89) মঙ্গলন = the bestower of bliss, (90) বাঁকচোর = the bent-bodied thief (means Śrīkṛṣṇa), (91) পুআন = the Eastern, (92) বিড়ি, (93) গঁড়ি = the snail, (94) গোপাল = Gopāl (the well-known Pāla king?), (95) হড়া, (96) বাঁশকাটা, (97) মরিচ = *Vangueria spinosa*, (98) অজয় = the unconquerable, (99) আমল, (100) পলিএ, (101) দাঅ = obligation, (102) বিড়া, (103) বয়, (104) লাত্র.

In Rameśwar's *Sivāyana* we find the following names : —

(1) হরিশঙ্কর = the gods Hari-Har in union, (2) হাতিপঞ্জর = elephant's ribs (meaning hard ?), (3) হুড়া, (4) হরকুলি, (5) হাতিনাদ, (6) হিঙ্গি = *Hingtsha repens*, (7) হলুদগুড় = the turmeric powder, (8) কেলে কান্ন = the black-complexioned Kṛṣṇa, (9) কেলেজীরা = the black cumin seed, (10) কালিয়া কান্তিকা = the black beauty, (11) কয়কচা, (12) কাশীফুল = the Kāśī flower (white ?), (13) কপোতকণ্ঠিকা = the neck of a pigeon, (14) কালিন্দী = the dark Jumna (in colour), (15) কটকী = the rice of Katak, (16) কুম্মশালী = the flower-like śāli, (17) কনকচূড় = the golden pinnacle, (18) দুধরাজ = milk-white, (19) দুর্গাভোগ = the offering for Durga, (20) পর্দেশী = foreign, (21) ধূতুর = the *Datura*, (22) কৃষ্ণশালি = the black-coloured śāli, (23) কোঙরভোগ = the offering for a prince, (24) কোঙর = the Kumāra, (25) পূর্ণিমা = the night of the full moon, (26) কন্দীলতা = *Convolvulus repens*, (27) কনকলতা = the golden creeper, (28) কামোদ = the oblation of water, (29) গরিমা = the pride, (30) খেজুরথুপী = the bunch of dates, (31) খয়ের শালি = the catechu-coloured śāli, (32) ক্ষেম = the prosperity, (33) গঙ্গাজল = the Ganges water, (34) গয়াবালি = the sand of Gayā, (35) গোপালভোগ = the offering for Gopal, (36) গৌরীকাজল = the collyrium for Gauri, (37) গন্ধমালতা = the sweet-smelling flower Gandhamālāti, (38) গুয়াথুপী = the bunch of betels, (39) গুণাকর = the mine of good quality, (40) চামরটালি = the expanded chowri, (41) চন্দনশালি = the sandal-scented śāli, (42) ছত্রশালি = the umbrella-like śāli, (43) জটশালি = the matted lock-like śāli, (44) জগন্নাথ ভোগ = the offering for the god Jagannath, (45) জামাইলাড় = the ball-shaped sweetmeat for a son-in-law, (46) জলারান্না = the rice which makes the water red (when boiled?), (47) ঝিঙ্গাশালি = the śāli rice resembling a *Luffa acutangula* in appearance, (48) বলাইভোগ = the offering for Balāi, (49) ধূতা = the resin-scented, (50) নিমুই = the rice resembling the fruits of *Melia azadirachta*,



(51) নন্দনশালি=the śāli rice fit to be the product of the heavenly garden Nandana, (52) রূপনারায়ণ=Rūpnārāyaṇ, (53) পাতসাভোগ=the offering for an emperor, (54) পায়রারস=the pigeon-coloured, (55) পিপীড়াবাক=the small rice resembling the bent figure of ants, (56) তিলসাগরী=the rice resembling the oil-seed *Sesamum Orientale*, (57) বাঁকশালি=the bent śāli, (58) বাকইবুয়ালি, (59) দারবঙ্গী=pertaining to Dwārbhāṅgā, (60) বাঁকচুর=the bracelet Bāṅkchud (in resemblance), (61) বুড়ামাত্রা, (62) রামশালি=the big śāli, (63) রাঙ্গী=the red-coloured rice, (64) রাঙ্গামেটে=the ochre-coloured earth (in colour), (65) রামগড়=pertaining to Rāmgarh, (66) রণজয়=victory, (67) লক্ষ্মীপ্রিয়=the favourite of Lakṣmī (the Goddess of fortune), (68) লাউশালি=the śāli rice resembling the shape of a long gourd, (69) লক্ষ্মীকাজল=the collyrium for the eyes of Lakṣmī, (70) ভোজনা=catable, (71) ভবানীভোগ=the offering for the Goddess Durgā, (72) ভুবনউজ্জল=the brightness of the world, (73) সীতাশালি=the śāli rice bearing the name of Sitā, (74) শঙ্করশালি=the śāli rice bearing the name of the god Siva, (75) শঙ্করজটা=the matted hair of the god Siva (in resemblance).

In the two lists as given here some names are common. These lists are surely not exhaustive and there are many other names not touched by the two poets. But they are quite adequate in helping us to form an idea. Many of the proper names are of course now meaningless, such as Chhichhirā, Kakachi, Alāchita, Kayā, Hutiyā, Tojnā, Bukhi, Bākai-Buāli, Kaikachhā, etc. With the growth of a classical taste and fondness for using ornate language, the names were picked up from poetical vocabularies and became refined and suggestive. Besides these, there are other names such as Gujurā (Gujarati), Gayābāli, Pardesi (foreign), Katakī, Rāmgar, Dwārbāṅgi, Javnā (coming from Java), and others which distinctly point to the fact

that many of the types of Bengal paddy had their origin in foreign soil. There are some other names which are poetic. These were Mukṭā-hār=a pearl-necklace, Nāgar-yuān=a youthful lover, Kapot-kanthikā=the neck of a pigeon, Lakṣmī-priya=the favourite of the goddess of Fortune, Rana-jaya=victory, Lakṣmī-kājal=the collyrium for the eyes of the goddess Lakṣmī, Kanakchud=the golden pinnacle, Bhuban-ujjwal=the brightness of the world, etc. Again, there were some names which perhaps denote the type or connote the qualities of the different classes of paddy. The following may be mentioned by way of illustration. Kelejirā=the black cumin seed, Kāśi-phul=the white Kāśi flower, Dudhrāj=milk-white, Kṛṣṇa-śāli=the black-coloured śāli, Kusum-śāli=the flower-like śāli, Khejur-thupi=the bunch of dates, Chāmardhāli=the bent-chowry, Jhinga-śāli=the śāli resembling a *Luffa acutangula*, Rāngi=the red-coloured rice, Lau-śāli=the śāli rice resembling a long gourd in shape, Rāngā-mete=resembling the ochre-coloured earth in colour, etc., etc.

The sweet smell which some kinds of rice possessed such as Benāphul,<sup>1</sup> Bānsmati, Bānsphul, Golāpkhās, Kāminī, etc., as is understood by their names and some types which are still extant in North Bengal lead us to hazard the conclusion that there were perhaps elaborate methods and scientific processes to develop types of paddy possessing particular scents. We know of a kind of plant known to the Bengalis as Rādhuni-pāglā and to the English as "Rice-Scent." It resembles the pineapple plant and is available in any common nursery. If two or three leaves of this

<sup>1</sup> "Benāphul is extremely sweet-scented resembling the nice scent of Khus-Khus flower. It is grown abundantly in Hooghly, Burdwan, Faridpur, Jessore, Howrah, 24-Parganas and Murshidabad Districts.

plant are thrown into the pot in which rice is being boiled, then it will possess the sweet scent of the Arabian jasmine. With all our efforts we have not been able to find out various processes in this connection but we think the period of reign of the Pāla kings of Bengal was very favourable for the purpose as certain kinds of paddy are still known by the names of Mahīpāl and Gopāl, the two most famous kings of the Pāla dynasty of North Bengal. It was quite possible to develop paddy into a certain scented type when we see that it is possible to develop fruits and flowers in a particular way according to the present-day scientific methods.

The two lists already mentioned have been taken from Ramāi Paṇḍit's *Sūnya Purān* and Rāmeśwar's *Śivāyana*. After careful enquiry it has been found that some of these paddies are cultivated even now in various parts of Bengal and are important enough to be noticed by the Department of Agriculture, Bengal.

A few of these paddies are mentioned below :—

(i) Parbatjirā.—It is a well-known paddy of Maldah and the neighbouring Districts. It is *āman* paddy.

(ii) Bādhāsābhog.—It specially belongs to the district of Burdwan and is also grown in many other districts such as Bankura, Hooghly and 24-Parganas. It is fine *āman* like Dādkhāni and as the name signifies was once a favourite of the aristocracy.

(iii) Nāgrā (Nāgar-yuān).—It is grown in many of the districts of Bengal such as Bankura, Hooghly and Burdwan. It is of two types—Nāgrā I and cultivator's Nāgrā. The former has been tried by various Government Agricultural farms and is decidedly the better of the two. The cultivator's Nāgrā is *āman* of the medium type.

(iv) Elāi (Elāchitā?).—Elāi is perhaps the same paddy as Elāchita described by Ramāi Paṇḍit in his *Sūnya Purān*.

Elāi is the local paddy of Hooghly, Maldah and Rajshahi districts. It is *āman* paddy. It is also found in some quantity in the Mymensingh District where it is known as Elāich.

(v) Kayā (Kaikachhā ?).—A very inferior type of paddy. Its use is restricted to poor people. It is found in some parts of West Bengal, chiefly in the district of Burdwan and partly in the district of Bankura.

(vi) Hookooli (Hoorkosāli ?).—It is grown in Bankura and the surrounding districts. It is of the *āman* class, big in size and ordinary in quantity.

(vii) Madhablatā (Mādhavī ?).—Mādhavī is *āus* paddy of the Mymensingh district (Kishoreganj side). It is of ordinary quality.

(viii) Gopālbhog (Gopāl ?).—Gopālbhog is fine *āman* paddy of good scent and belongs to many districts of Bengal, such as, Murshidabad, Burdwan, Noakhali, Bankura, Maldah, Mymensingh, Backerganj, Dacca and Dinajpur. It is fine *āman*. We think the name has connection with the celebrated Pāla king of the same name. In Murshidabad it is of the *āus* kind.

(ix) Jhingāsāl.—It is grown chiefly in the districts of Backerganj, Murshidabad, Bankura, Nuddea, Jessore, Pabna, Midnapur, Faridpur, Hooghly, Birbhum, Burdwan, Maldah and Rajshahi. Besides it is grown in Hazaribagh, Lohardaga, and the Santhal Parganas outside Bengal. It is both coarse and fine *āman*. It is known as Bada-jhingā in Bankura side.

(x) Marichbuti (Marich).—It chiefly belongs to the Rajshahi district. It is *āus* paddy and is of medium quality. Perhaps Marichbuti is the same as Marich paddy of our old literature.

(xi) Kataktārā (Kataki ?).—It belongs to the various localities such as Hooghly, Dacca, Barisal, Mymensingh,

Rangpur, Bogra, Comilla, Jessore and Murshidabad. The paddy is known at Dacca as Dacca No. 2. It is *āuš* paddy. The Agricultural Department of Bengal has taken this paddy as the best producing type of its class as it has taken Indrasāil among the *āman* paddy. Kataktārā is produced in various districts though many of them are wide apart from one another. Kataktārā is taken as the departmentally improved rice. "In Eastern and Northern Bengal..... Indrasāil, Dudsar and Kataktārā are capable of giving about one maund a bigha more than the local cultivator's seed. In 1922, it was estimated that the area under these varieties was about 3,63,000 bighas."<sup>1</sup> "It has kept up its reputation and is expanding specially in Nadia which is mainly an *āuš*-growing tract."<sup>2</sup> "It is a highland broadcast paddy which is becoming very popular in Eastern and Northern Bengal (excepting the neighbourhood of Rajshahi) as well as in the Presidency Division."<sup>3</sup> "Dacca No. 2 Kataktārā is a medium-fine highland *āuš* and late-ripening paddy which does best on fertile highland with plenty of moisture and in rotation with a *rabi* crop. It is not so suitable for double-cropped paddy land."<sup>4</sup>

(xii) Rāmsāli.—It is native to the soil of Bankura. It is *āman* in type and is best among the different *sāli* varieties of paddy such as Lakshmansāli, Gourāngasāli, Dudhsāli and Hoorkosāli obtainable in the district of Bankura.

(xiii) Kalmilatā (Kalamtāl or Jātkalmā).—Jātkalmā is the local paddy of Hooghly and Burdwan districts. It

<sup>1</sup> Bulletin No. 2 (Agricultural Department, Bengal), dated the 6th January, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> Agricultural Report Demonstration, Presidency Division, 1924-25.

<sup>3</sup> Botanical Section Report, Agricultural Department, Bengal, 1924-1925.

<sup>4</sup> Bulletin issued by the Director of Agriculture, Bengal, dated the 6th January, 1925.

is *āman* paddy. Perhaps it is the same as *Kalmilatā* of our old literature and *Kalamtāl* of Maldah.

(xiv) *Kanakchuḍ*.—It is *āman* paddy and is cultivated mainly in the localities of Bankura and Maldah. The fried paddy (*khai*) from *Kanakchuḍ* is round in shape and very fine to taste. It also smells very sweet.

(xv) *Dudhkalmā* (*Dudhrāj*?).—It is cultivated in many districts such as Bankura, Hooghly and Burdwan. It is both *āuš* and *āman*. As *āuš* it is grown in Dinajpur side. As *āman* paddy it belongs to the fine class. It is a heavy yielder and is the best paddy among fine *āman* type of West Bengal as the varietal test at the Chinsurah Government farm has shown in 1924-25. We cannot definitely say if *Dudhkalmā* is the same paddy as the *Dudhrāj* of the old Bengali literature. But we think both the names refer to the same kind of paddy. The name *Dudhrāj* seems to indicate fine paddy with milk-white colour.

(xvi) *Kelejirā*.—It is a fine *āman* paddy cultivated in many of the districts of Bengal. In Bankura district it is cultivated as medium type *āman*.

Besides the above there are other paddies grown in various parts of our province; some of these have evidently changed their names or are known differently in different parts by local names—so that they do not always agree with the names given in our literature so far as I have explored it. Here follows a list of some of them :—

(i) *Dudhsar*.—It is grown in many districts, such as Maldah, Rajshahi, Hooghly, Dacca and Mymensingh. It is a coarse *āman*. It is similar to Dacca No. 1, but ripens about a week earlier. For this reason it is more suited for lighter soil and higher situation. It is an important paddy.

According to the Botanical investigation of the Agricultural Department, Bengal (1924-1925)—“Dudhsar is a race of transplanted paddy which is nearly as heavy a yielder as Indrasāil but which matures nearly a fortnight earlier. It has done very well in the Bahrind tract in Maldah where it is now being cultivated on some thousands of bighas and where it is likely to extend largely.”

(ii) Dudhsāli.—This paddy belongs chiefly to the locality of Bankura. Its quality is not very good. It is a rather coarse *āman* of medium type and is not much favoured by people.

(iii) Sindurmukhi.—It is native to the soil of Bankura and Birbhum localities. In Maldah a variety of it is known as Sonāmukhi. It is an *āman* paddy and ripens early. An acre can yield  $17\frac{1}{2}$  mds. of Sindurmukhi paddy at Suri if carefully grown. The paddy looks red like vermillion on its tip and is therefore so-called (*lit.* vermillion-tipped).

(iv) Hātisāl.—It belongs to the district of Hooghly and some other parts of West Bengal. It is an *āman* paddy.

(v) Hatipānjar.—A very coarse kind of *āus* rice consumed by the poor people of various localities of Bengal.

(vi) Tilakphul.—It is produced in certain districts such as Maldah. At Dacca there is a kind of paddy called Tilakkachāri which we suggest may have some connection with Tilakphul. Tilakphul is *āman* in kind.

(vii) Gaurāngasāli.—It is a paddy of Bankura and other districts and *āman* in type. It is of medium quality.

(viii) Dādkhāni.—It is the paddy of Bankura, Maldah, Rajshahi and Dacca districts. It is *āman* in kind and very fine in quality. It is equal in quality with Badshābhog and Kātāribhog paddies which are also very fine *āman*. In the varietal test at the Chinsurah Government farm (1924-25) Dādkhāni did best among the three by way of maximum production in a certain plot of land.

(ix) Bhramarkāndi.—It belongs chiefly to the districts of Burdwan Division such as Bankura. The coating of the paddy is red and it is *āman* (?) in kind.

(x) Donārgudā.—It is an *āman* paddy of Bankura side and possesses a very fine smell. It is very fine in quality for which it has great reputation in the locality.

(xi) Chatuinakhi (*lit.* the talon of a sparrow).—It is a very fine *āman*—even more fine than Donārgudā. It belongs, among many places, to the locality of Bankura. It is so called because in fineness and shape it resembles the small talons of a sparrow.

(xii) Nonā.—This paddy is of ordinary quality and is cultivated in many districts of West Bengal. It is an *āman* paddy.

(xiii) Kathiānonā.—It belongs to various districts of West Bengal such as Bankura. Its rice is reddish in colour. It is very sweet and soft to taste.

(xiv) Lakshmanśāli.—It is grown in Bankura and various other districts of Burdwan side and is an *āman* in type. It is medium in quality.

(xv) Newāli.—It is an *āus* paddy of West Bengal. The rice is ordinary in quality.

(xvi) Bādkalamkāti.—It is grown in West Bengal. It is an *āman* paddy and is of ordinary quality.

(xvii) Barankalamkāti.—It is an *āman* paddy mainly of Burdwan Division. It is also of ordinary quality.

(xviii) Mahīpāl.—It is an *āman* rice of green colour and rather sweet to taste. It possesses long grain.

(xix) Indrasāil.—Indrasāil is now the chief *āman* paddy—though not the very best—throughout Bengal. It does not thrive well in uplands as it is a paddy essentially of lowlands. The Government farms at various centres are



carrying on experiments with it. The following observations of the Botanical Section of the Agricultural Department, Bengal (1924-25), will be of interest to the readers.

“The investigation into paddy continues to occupy practically the whole of the time of Dr. Hector and his staff. Careful experiments done at several centres indicate that when the soil moisture is likely to last beyond the beginning of December, *Indrasāil* as a transplanted paddy, is likely to be supreme. These results apply at centres as far apart as Chinsurah, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Dacca. On the lower terraces of the slopes *Indrasāil* gives a heavier yield than local paddies. At Rajshahi in plots duplicated five times over three successive years the average yield of *Indrasāil* was three maunds twelve seers per acre better than the best local rice tried against it.” While at Burdwan the maximum production was 37 mds. 10 $\frac{2}{3}$  seers per acre (1924-25). “At Dacca a special test was conducted of *Indrasāil* against the local seed of *Mālāti*, the standard paddy of the Dacca district. This resulted in an increased yield in favour of *Indrasāil* of 25 per cent. There is little doubt but that, where conditions are suitable, *Indrasāil* will hold its own against any of the standard local paddies in East and Northern Bengal. In trials conducted at Chinsurah now for five years it has beaten local *Nāgrā* by an average of 2 mds. 34 seers of grain per acre, and 9 mds. 7 seers of straw; and at Rajshahi in trials conducted for three consecutive years, it has beaten the standard local paddy by 2 mds. 12 seers.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus it is clear *Indrasāil* is a transplanted *āman* paddy and thrive well in the lowlands of Dacca, Rajshahi,

<sup>1</sup> Testing of *Indrasāil* against the best local paddies. (Report of the Agriculture Department of Bengal, 1924-25.)

Bankura, Jessore, etc. Its outturn is greatest in all places of Bengal against local *āman* paddies and the Government farms have proved it. But it is not of the finest quality—rather it is a coarse *āman*. If we divide the most prominent *āman* paddies of Bengal into three classes we shall see Dādkhāni, Bādsābhog and Kātāribhog belong to the finest group; Nāgrā, Bhāsmānik and Kājalsāil belong to the medium group; and Dudsar, Jhingāsāil and Indrasāil belong to the coarse group. Of all these *āman* paddies as have been said already, Indrasāil is the heaviest yielder and have beaten down the local *āman* paddies of various districts in this respect. Thus Indrasāil has proved its superiority by way of output over Nāgrā I and cultivator's Nāgrā of Hooghly, Gāziā and Elāi of Rajshahi, Nāgrā Jātkalmā and Dudkalmā of Burdwan and other paddies.

(xx) Manikkalmā.—Kalmā is an *āman* paddy and is grown in various districts of Bengal. There are varieties of Kalmā paddy such as Manikkalmā, Dudhkalmā, Kartikkalmā, Nilkalmā, etc. Manikkalmā is grown chiefly in the district of Birbhum.

(xxi) Bhāsmānik.—It is a West Bengal paddy. It is an *āman* paddy of medium quality.

(xxii) Kājalsāil.—It is a medium *āman* of Hooghly-Chinsurah side. It is somewhat better than Indrasāil in quality but yields less in quantity.

(xxiii) Kātāribhog.—It is a fine *āman* specially of Maldah and Hooghly side. Its quality is the same as that of Dādkhāni and Bādsābhog. The rice is extensively taken all over Bengal.

(xxiv) Rādhunipāgal.—It is a West Bengal *āman* chiefly of Burdwan, Nuddea and Murshidabad side. It is an *āman* of very good quality. Its very name which means—“The cook runs mad” (for its excellence and fragrance) shows its fine quality.

(xxv) Joshābālām.—It belongs to the localities of Rajshahi and Hooghly. It is an *āman* paddy.

(xxvi) Gāziā.—It is an *āman* paddy and extensively grown in various districts such as Rajshahi, Hooghly and Mymensingh. It is a fine *āman*. In Mymensingh side it is popularly known as Gāinjā.

(xxvii) Sūryyamukhī (*lit.* the Sunflower).—It is otherwise known as Dacca No. 4. It is a medium fine *āus* and is grown in highlands. It is similar to Kataktārā and is originally grown in the districts of Burdwan, Backerganj and Nuddea.

(xxviii) Chārnock.—It is also known as Dacca No. 6. It is cultivated mostly in Jessore and Murshidabad localities. It is a highland *āus* and is of a very fine quality and suited to lighter soil. It ripens earlier than Kataktārā (Dacca No. 2) and Suryyamukhi (Dacca No. 4).

(xxix) Mālāti.—It is the local *āman* of Dacca district and is a very popular paddy. Its production is great and only inferior to Indraśail in this respect.

(xxx) Bānsphul.—It is an *āman* paddy of a fine quality. It is cultivated in many localities of Bengal.

(xxxi) Jethi.—It is an *āus* paddy of Maldah side. "The Bhādoi rice Jethi is sown in May and reaped in August-September ; but a variety of sixty-day rice known as Jethi is sown in small quantities in April in the Ganges diara in the mud at the edge of the river and reaped in June before the river begins to rise." <sup>1</sup>

As for the two principal kinds of paddy, besides 'boro,' viz., "*āus*" and "*āman*," two lists are furnished below

to show the number of varieties these are cultivated in various districts of Bengal :

| Districts           | <i>Aus</i> |    | <i>Aman</i> |    |
|---------------------|------------|----|-------------|----|
|                     | Kinds      |    | Kinds       |    |
| Burdwan             | ...        | 10 | ...         | 34 |
| Birbhum             | ...        | 70 | ...         | 28 |
| Hooghly             | ...        | 10 | ...         | 21 |
| Howrah              | ...        | 4  | ...         | 12 |
| Midnapur            | ...        | 16 | ...         | 31 |
| 24-Parganas         | ...        | 35 | ...         | 24 |
| Bankura             | ...        | 10 | ...         | 18 |
| Nuddea              | ...        | 20 | ...         | 40 |
| Murshidabad         | ...        | 15 | ...         | 22 |
| Jessore             | ...        | 14 | ...         | 62 |
| Khulna              | ...        | 18 | ...         | 27 |
| Dacca               | ...        | 22 | ...         | 30 |
| Mymensingh          | ...        | 4  | ...         | 21 |
| Faridpur            | ...        | 14 | ...         | 15 |
| Backerganj          | ...        | 30 | ...         | 90 |
| Tipperah            | ...        | 12 | ...         | 2  |
| Noakhali            | ...        | 6  | ...         | 8  |
| Chittagong          | ...        | 10 | ...         | 14 |
| Rajshahi            | ...        | 6  | ...         | 25 |
| Dinajpur            | ...        | 15 | ...         | 44 |
| Jalpaiguri          | ...        | 5  | ...         | 16 |
| Rangpur             | ...        | 7  | ...         | 2  |
| Bogra               | ...        | 8  | ...         | 22 |
| Pabna               | ...        | 8  | ...         | 27 |
| Maldah              | ...        | 12 | ...         | 15 |
| Sylhet              | ...        | 6  | ...         | 10 |
| Comilla             | ...        | 4  | ...         | 12 |
| Sundarbans locality | ...        | 18 | ...         | 42 |

*Difficulties in Agriculture :—*

Agriculture in alluvial soil has its difficulties. Besides the reclaiming of waste lands and bogs which is never a pleasant task—tilling itself has many hardships and disappointments inherent in it. Although agriculture was given the first place among the four kinds of life's avocations, as mentioned before, still its dark side too was never ignored. Even the Government of the time had enough to do to shape the prosperity or ruin of agriculture. The following is quoted by way of illustration :—

“ It is with great trouble that harvest can be gathered. If there is drought then it is all over with the peasant. If there is good crop forthcoming in any one year, the king is cruel enough to put it to sale for his own benefit at the expense of the poor cultivators. In spite of the good harvest it is not the cultivators who really get the profit—but the king. The peasants till the soil amidst immense sufferings in the mud and bog, and drag on their miserable existence not so much by mixing with the really good men as by coaxing very bad people who are self-seeking to the extreme and are the real masters of the land.”<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes flood destroys the crops, thus disappointing the peasantry to a great degree. Thus in Maluā (Mymensingh Ballads) the tale of Chand Benode's sad plight due to excessive inundation, touches our heart.

“ When the month of Aswin came, the flood remained to such an extent that all the crops went down the water, thus destroying them. This made Chand Benode quite penniless.....In this way Aswin passed by and Kartik came with no better prospect.....The miseries of Chand Benode were beyond description. There was not enough paddy

<sup>1</sup> Chāsā-pālā by Rāmeśwar, C. U. MS. No. 2455, F. 3.

in the granary even for the purpose of worshipping the harvest-goddess (Lakṣmī).''<sup>1</sup>

Besides the difficulties mentioned above, there were others causing very chilling effects on agriculture. The most important thing in this respect is the nature of the soil. Sometimes a marsh full of leeches had to be drained and sometimes a jungle had to be cleared before ordinary agricultural operations can be carried on. The following lines incidentally give a true picture of the exact condition of the work which is the same even now :—

“When the paddy had grown in the fields it was then required to clear the fields of the weeds. The goddess Durgā became aware of the intention of the god Śiva in this respect and sent the leeches to annoy the great god. The leeches of the smaller type moved on the grass and the bigger ones remained in water with the hope of licking blood of the unhappy victims who would come within their reach. Śiva's assistant Br̥kodara came to the fields in the morning for clearing the weeds and the Lord himself sat on the grassy ridge near by. Both were attacked by the leeches but none of them had the suspicion of these blood-suckers at first.....When they became aware of the situation, they got very much nervous. They found thousands of these leeches sticking to their bodies. With great strength they tried to pull them off but without any appreciable success as the creatures being sleek, every time they pulled them, they slipped out of their hands. Śiva, however, then took another recourse which became effective. Beseeched by his servant Br̥kodara to adopt some means for averting the danger, Śiva applied lime and salt all over

<sup>1</sup> See the story of Maluā (Mymensingh Ballads, Bengali version), p. 43.

the affected parts, as a result of which, all the leeches discharged blood and were at last killed.<sup>1</sup> The above account inspite of its legendary character gives a true picture of the difficulties faced by the peasantry in agricultural operations up to the present day. In another place of the same work we find “the god Śiva (described as a farmer) advising his assistant the method of cultivation. The first step was to weed out the tares with great zeal. Both the master and his servant worked hard and in a very short time planted the seedlings of paddy, raised the ridges and cleared the field of many kinds of wild grass. Both of them laboured in the field from morn till noon daily.”<sup>2</sup>

The above is a genuine picture of the practice of the peasantry even of to-day, though the matter has been introduced here as a religious legend. The rainfall is, of course, a great factor determining the success of agriculture. To the cultivators, according to the time-honoured belief, it is the god Indra, the dispenser of rains, upon whose freaks depend all their hopes and fears. When there is

<sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup> See the *Sivāyana* by Rāmesvar

The custom of working only half-a-day had once the backing of the śāstras. The śāstras specially recommended this time-limit when one worked with the bull. In the *Parāśara Saṁhitā* we find,

“*হিরাঙ্গং নীকজং তৃণং স্নানদ্বিগুণজিতম্ ।*

*বাহয়েদ্বিগুণজিতং পশ্চাৎস্নানং সমাচরেৎ ।*”

—*পরাশর-সংহিতা* ৪।২

(“An able-bodied bull free from disease, well-fed, hearty, and not impotent should be made to work for half the day. Then should one give the bull a wash.” Of course the practice arose owing to the humanitarian principle adopted towards the bovine class.)

conflagration in an extensive scale in clearing a forest or an excessive drought in the land, the cultivators naturally pray, “ Oh Indra, save the creation ! Shower the nectary rains so that people may live by cultivation.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “ ইন্দ্র বলিয়া হর পাড়িল হুঙ্কার ।  
 ছিষ্ট রকথা কর ইন্দ্র হৈল ছারখার ॥  
 খীর কুণ্ডর খীর অমর্ত কুণ্ডর পানী ।  
 অমর্ত বরিষণ ইন্দ্র করিল আপুনি ॥”

—রামেশ্বরের শিবায়ন ।

In the Sivâyana the function of Indra to shower rains reminds us of many Vedic hymns.



### ECONOMIC CONDITION.

1

See also ' Māṇik Chandra Rājār Gān ' dealing with the same story.

<sup>2</sup> The public roads were approached by short paths from the village-houses and the owners had full control over them.

We find the same story of opulence repeated in another place in a poem named Gorakṣa-Vijay, wherein we see that there was a city whose inhabitants were so opulent that 'nobody would drink water from a tank not his own. They would dry their valuable gems under the sun (so great was their number).'<sup>1</sup> In another place of the same work there is a description of golden houses and of men bedecked with jewellery. They used golden vases for drinking water.<sup>2</sup> In fact in the early literature, specially in the ballads, there are profuse references to golden utensils and articles of luxury, and however hyperbolic the accounts may be, there was surely a stratum of truth underlying them.

The old Bengali literature is full of references of articles of luxury. These also point out that the arts and crafts of the country were once of a very high order. Among the innumerable items of luxury we note a few in this place.

- 1                    কার পথরির পানি কেহ নাহি খাএ ।  
                       মণি মাণিক্য তারা রৌদ্রেতে স্থখাএ ॥  
    —সেখ ফয়জুল্লা কৃত গোরক্ষবিজয়, পৃ: ৫৪ ।

- 2                    স্থানে স্থানে দেখে সব অমরানগর ।  
                       সকল নগরে দেখে উচ্চ উচ্চ ঘর ॥  
                       সুবর্ণের ঘর সব পতাকা রচিত ।  
                       সকল দেশের লোক রতনে ভূষিত ॥  
                       রাজ্যের সকল দেখে তার ভাল রঙ্গ ।  
                       প্রতি ঘরঘারে দেখে হিরণ্যের টঙ্গ ॥  
                       ধন্য ধন্য রাজনগর করিয়া বাখানি ।  
                       সুবর্ণের কলসে সর্বলোকে থায় পানি ॥  
    —সেখ ফয়জুল্লা কৃত গোরক্ষবিজয়, পৃ: ৫৫ ।

See also Dr. Sen's বঙ্গভাষা ও সাহিত্য (First ed.), pp. 238-239 and pp. 518-520, for general condition of the people of the period.

There were many exquisitely woven *sādīs* for ladies of rank. Among them we specially note, the ‘Mayūr-Pekham’ and the ‘Megh-dambur.’ The former was perhaps of variegated colour as the name ‘Mayūr-Pekham’ (*lit.* Peacock’s tail) would signify, while the latter ‘Megh-dambur’ (*lit.* collection of black cloud) would signify the dark colour of the *sādī*. The mention of these two is found in our old folk-lore. Thus in D. Majumdar’s collection of stories we find at one place—

“The princess opened her wardrobe and wore the Mayūr-Pekham’ *sādī*. The colour of the *sādī* brightened her room—its beauty greatly affected her mind.”<sup>1</sup>

And at another place—

“The princess had flowing hair. She was wearing the ‘Megh-dambur’ *sādī* and sandal-besmeared *chādar*.”<sup>2</sup>

Another kind of *sādī* which had much celebrity in the past was named ‘Āgun-pāter-sādī’ (*lit.* *sādī* made of fire-coloured silk). This we find mentioned among others in ‘Māṇik Chandra Rājār Gān.’ Thus, “The harlot will use such an exquisite *sādī* as Āgun-pāter-sādī, while you will use a torn and worn-out rag.”<sup>3</sup>

The aristocracy naturally was very particular about their bedsteads or *khāt* otherwise known as *Pālāṅkas*.

<sup>1</sup> “রাজকন্যা পেটরা আনিয়া ময়ূরপেখম শাড়ী খুলিয়া পরিলেন। শাড়ীর রঙে ঘর উজ্জল, শাড়ীর শোভায় রাজকন্যার মন উত্তল।”

—দক্ষিণাবাবুর ঠাকুরমার ঝুলি, শীতবসন্ত, পৃঃ ৯৩।

<sup>2</sup> “রাজকন্যার এলোবেশ চুল, মেঘডম্বুর শাড়ী, চন্দনরাজা চাদর।”

—দক্ষিণাবাবুর ঠাকুরমার ঝুলি, মধুমাল্য, পৃঃ ২৩।

<sup>3</sup> বেথার পরিধান হব আগুন পাটের সাড়ী।

তোর রাজার পরিধান হব বারগাঁইটের দড়ি ॥

—মানিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান।

They used very costly couches and thus we hear of couches made of gold and precious stones. In one of the folk-tales we learn that “in a pair of golden couches the king’s son and his friend, the minister’s son, fell asleep.”<sup>1</sup> In another we find the heroine “Mālañca-mālā lying on a golden couch.”<sup>2</sup> Yet in another story we come across “a couch which was made of gold having diamond-set handles with garlands of flower on them.”<sup>3</sup>

On a bed two articles of luxury attract our attention. One of them ‘Sītal-pāṭī’ (a kind of mat) though very commonplace was once an article of luxury. It was perhaps more exquisitely made than now. The other ‘Indra-kambal’ (perhaps a kind of highly finished blanket) is not to be met with now-a-days. References of both are found in Māṇik Chandra Rājār Gān among other works. Thus a queen of Rājā Govinda Chandra when trying to dissuade him from adopting ‘sannyās’ mentioned many articles of luxury to which she was accustomed in their royal palace and which she would all lose if he gave up his worldly fortunes. Among these articles we also find the name of ‘Sītal-pāṭī’. She said, “I shall spread for you on the bed a Sītal-pāṭī.”<sup>4</sup>

1 “সোণার যুগল পালকে রাজপুত্র উজ্জীর পুত্র শুইয়া নিদ্রা গেলেন।”

—দক্ষিণাবাবুর ঠাকুরমার ঝুলি, মধুমালী, পৃ: ১৭।

2 “সোনার পালকে মালঞ্চমালী,”—

—দক্ষিণাবাবুর ঠাকুরদাদার ঝুলি, মালঞ্চমালী, পৃ: ১৩৬।

3 “সোণার খাটে হীরার ডাঁট, হীরার ডাঁটে ফুলের মালা দোলান রহিয়াছে,”—

—দক্ষিণাবাবুর ঠাকুরমার ঝুলি, যুগ্মপুত্রী, পৃ: ৫৮।

4 “শীতল পাটী বিছাইয়া দিমু”—

—মানিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান।

In the same story at another place, the harlot Hīrā<sup>1</sup> is given the credit of knowing the art of bed-making by placing a mattress three feet high and spreading over it a Śītal-pāṭī ; she used to cover it with a valuable blanket called the Indra-kambal. It seems from the above that even rich ladies knew the art of making a bed as they knew the culinary art.

In Gorakṣa-Vijaya we find, curiously enough, that people sometimes indulged in luxury even in such a thing as the sacred thread along with sticks and umbrellas, if any credence can at all be put on such poetic effusions. Thus,—

“ You must request him (the architect-god Visvakarmā) to make on my behalf sacred thread made of gold. Besides cowries, cane, umbrella and stick—all should be made of gold for my use.”<sup>2</sup>

In Manasā-maṅgal poems of a later age we see a merchant<sup>3</sup> using golden slippers before going to bed. It seems shoes were very rare at one time in this country as sandals were more in use. The Dharma-maṅgal poems mention velvet shoes.<sup>4</sup> Although these two poems were

- <sup>1</sup> “বিছানা করিতে নটী ভাল জানে ।  
সাঁটার উপর পাটী বিছায় এক বুক উছল ।  
তার উপরে ফেলাইয়া দিল ইন্দ্রকম্বল ॥”

—মানিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান

- <sup>2</sup> “তান ঠাই আশ্রয় কহিবা কার্য্য কথা ।  
সোণার নগুণ মোরে গড়ি দিতে পৈতা ॥  
সুবর্ণের ত্রিকড়ি দেউক সুবর্ণের ছড়ি ।  
সুবর্ণের ছাতি দেউক সুবর্ণের লাঠি ॥”

—গৌরকবিজয় (সেখ ফরুজুল্লা), পৃ: ৪৯-৫০

<sup>3</sup> See Manasā-maṅgal poems, by Barṁsidās,

<sup>4</sup> See Dharma-maṅgal poems, by Ghaṇarām.

written in the Mahomedan period still in regard to certain manners and customs, we believe, they refer to the previous Hindu period.

Among the rest the names of the following may not be out of place.<sup>1</sup> These were মুঠ শঙ্খ, সুবর্ণ কাটারী, সোনালী চালুন, গঙ্গাজলি সাড়ী, চটক ধুতি, মটক ধুতি, স্বর্ণখাল, স্বর্ণবাটী, স্বর্ণপিঁড়ী, দণ্ডপাখা, etc., etc.

Our folk-lore and Manasā-maṅgal poems give us glimpses into the economic condition of the country in full detail. We may reject some of these as exaggerated but there is a good deal in these accounts which will stand a historical test.

A fascinating picture is given of Madhumālā who awakes from sleep by the spell cast upon her by the fairies in the middle of the night and taking it to be the dawn of the day, thus muses within herself: “I wonder if it is morning, why then does not the bird sārī sing its gay note in its cage as is its wont? If it is morning why do not the anklets (mal) sound on the busy feet of maid-servants? And why do the three long rows of lamps fed by clarified butter still burn in my compartments?”<sup>2</sup> The princess Madhumālā is described as sleeping on a

<sup>1</sup> See Maynāmatī songs and Dakshinā Babu's collection of folk-lore among other works.

<sup>2</sup> See Sen's Folk—Literature of Bengal, p. 72.

See D. Majumdar's Thākurdādār Jhulī, Madhumālā, p. 21.

“পুরীর সাত-ছত্রিশ-তের কুঠরী পরে মধুমালার ঘর। সেই ঘরে তিন সারি ঘিয়ের বাতি, তের থাক পালকে মধুমালার নিঝুমে ঘুম যায়।”

Also *ibid*, p. 22.

“প্রথমে আগিলেন,—মধুমাল। দেখেন,—“কেনরে। রাত পোহাইয়া গিয়াছে—পিঞ্জরে শারী বোলে না, খাই দাসীর পায়ের মল বাজে না, তিন সারি ঘিয়ের বাতি এখনো জলে।”

golden couch decorated with diamonds and pearls, the cushion spread over it being prepared with thirteen varieties of rich silk.

The people of Bengal once had an extensive overseas trade as evidenced from stories of the *Manasā-maṅgal* poems and the *Chañḍī-kāvya*s. The merchant class seems to be very influential as described in these works and they brought untold wealth from distant lands. Our folk-literature in spite of exaggerations also supports the idea and *Dakshinā Babu*'s collections, *e.g.*, *Ṭhākurmār Jhulī* and *Ṭhākurdādār Jhulī*, are full of these stories. In the latter work we find the names are given to individuals more in honour of the precious gems and gold rather than in the name of the deities as is characteristic of a later age.

Thus in *Dakshinā Babu*'s collection of folk stories<sup>1</sup> we find such names as *Kāñcanmālā* (a string of gold), *Manimālā* (a string of pearls), *Ṣaṅkhamālā* (a string of sea-shells), etc., possessed by ladies of high rank. In *Dakshinā Babu*'s story of the Princess *Kalāvati* we have names of six princes as follows:—*Hīrārāj* (Diamond-prince), *Māṇikrāj* (Gem-prince), *Matirāj* (Emerald-prince), *Ṣaṅkharāj* (Shell-prince)

<sup>1</sup> See *Ṭhākurmār Jhulī* and *Ṭhākurdādār Jhulī* of D. Majumdar for these examples :

(a) বড় বড় কারিকর রূপালাল, সোনালাল, হীরাশাশিক, জয়বিজয়, রাজ্যের আর যত কারিকর গিয়া, সেই পাথরের পাহাড় ভাঙ্গিয়া পাতালে পুরী তৈয়ার করিল।—ঠাকুরদাসের ঝুলি, মধুমালা।

(b) পাঁচ রাজপুত্রের নাম হইল—হীরা রাজপুত্র, মানিক রাজপুত্র, মোতি রাজপুত্র, শঙ্খ রাজপুত্র আর কাঞ্চন রাজপুত্র।—ঠাকুরদাসের ঝুলি, কলাবতী রাজকন্তা, পৃ: ২৯।

(c) ডকা দিলেন নৌকা নড়ে না। কর্ণধার ছললধন। সকল মাশি বলে সওদাগর একি ? ডিগি কেন নড়ে না ?—ঠাকুরদাসের ঝুলি, কাঞ্চনমালা, পৃ: ৬৮।

and Kāñcanrāj (Gold-prince). The love of gold and gems perhaps pervaded the society so much that all sections of the people had a liking to be called by the names of the precious metals and stones. Thus in the story of Madhumālā two of the architects were called Hīrāmāñik (Diamond) and Sonālāl (Gold). The captain of a ship in the story of Kāñcanmālā was named Dulāldhan (dearly-prized wealth).

The following illustrations will show the poverty of a section of the people even when another section was enjoying enough plenty. This was sometimes due to occasional misrule that prevailed. Thus in reading of the prosperity of the people in the Maynāmatī songs we read in the same breath the following :—

“ An East Bengal man with a sweeping beard came from the south to be the adviser of Rājā Māñik Chandra. He raised the taxation of the people which was originally a pice and a half to so much as double the amount (*i.e.*, three pice). It was felt so exorbitant at the time that the poor people had to sell not only their agricultural implements but also their children who were still mere sucklings. Widows and poor people had to suffer much and the arable lands were turned into jungles in many places.”<sup>1</sup>

See also Sen's Folk Literature of Bengal, pp. 66-73.

1

ভাটি হইতে আইল বাদল লবা লবা দাড়ি ।  
 সেই বাদল আসিয়া মূলুক কৈল কড়ি ॥  
 আছিল দেড় বুড়ি খাজনা লৈল পোনের গণ্ডা ।  
 লালল বেচায় জোয়াল বেচায় আরো বেচায় কাল ।  
 খাজনার তাপতে বেচায় হুথের ছাওয়াল ॥  
 রাড়ী কান্দাল হঃখীর বড় হুথ হইল ।  
 খানে খানে তালুক সব ছন হইয়া গেল ॥

—মানিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।



In Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām's celebrated *Chandīkāvya*, there is a graphic description of the miseries of poor people in the *Vāramāsi* of *Phullarā*, the fowler-woman. At another place of the same work we find the sorrows of a girl who had to keep goats. The younger wife of a rich merchant had, through some family intrigues, been obliged to tend the goats in pasture. The following is the description of the miseries of *Khullanā*, the younger wife :—<sup>1</sup>

“ She entered the house in the evening with the goats in her charge. They were shewn their sheds. And *Khullanā* stood at the gate with her hands on her heart. She was not permitted to enter the house, but her poor meal was served on a leaf of *kachu* (a kind of esculent root) outside. She received soup in holes made in earth. The dish was as poor as possible. She had rice-dust and the curries stale without any salt in them. She was given *kānji* (a kind of acid soup) of sour taste which was quite unpalatable. So she remained practically half-fed. She was given a straw-bed to lie upon.”

Again, “*Khullanā* started with the goats in the morning. The wicked co-wife tied some rice in the corner of

<sup>1</sup> “অজা লয়া আইল রামা দিন অবশেষে ।

অজা-শালে অজাগণে করাল্য প্রবেশ ॥

হয়ারে দাঙায় রামা বুকে দিয়া হাত ।

লহনার আদেশে আনিল কচুপাত ॥

ভুঞ্জয়ে খুলনা নারী গর্তে পাড়ি পাত ।

পরসিতে লহনা করয়ে যাতায়াত ॥

পুরাণ খুন্দের জাউ তাহে আছে কোণ ।

সকল ব্যঞ্জন কাঁঝী নাহি দেয় লোণ ॥

\* \* \* \* \*

হৃদয়ে কপট বড় পাপমতি কাঁঝী ।

অবশেষে সরায় পুরিয়া দিল কাঁজি ॥

Khullanā's cloth for her mid-day meal. Khullanā took a rod in her hand and a leaf on her head for protection against the burning sun. The maid-servant of her co-wife Lahana, named Durbalā, kept a vigilant look on her on the pretext of going to the tank. Khullanā trudged on her way rather slowly.'

While the legend describes the hardships to which a poor oppressed girl was reduced, it gives us a picture of poverty and the environments of the life of the lower order of society. It will be evident from the above that the general condition of the people in the pre-Mahomedan period, and to some extent in the Mahomedan period, though good on the whole, was not ideal as described by our poets who revelled in exaggeration.

The people of Bengal excelled in the art of weaving in the past. From our early literature we learn of cloths, chiefly sādīs, bearing artistic names and exquisite embroidery work.

The sādīs which were made of silk were variously named such as, Kāla-Pāṭ-sādī, Āgun-Pāṭ-sādī and Kāncā-Pāṭ-sādī. In short these were all known as Pāṭsādīs.

কিছু খায় কিছু ফেলে খুলনা সুন্দরী ।

তুণের শস্যায় তার গেল বিভাবরী ॥”

—কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী, পৃ: ১৪২ ।

পুনরায়—

“প্রভাতে হাগল লয়া চলিল খুলনা ।

আঁচলে বাঁধিল দুয়া চালু অর্ধ-কোণা ॥

ছাটহাতে পাতমাথে ধীরে ধীরে যায় ।

জল আনিবার ছলে দুর্বলা গোড়ায় ॥”

—কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী, পৃ: ১৪২

(a) *Kāla-Pāṭ-sāḍī* <sup>1</sup> (*lit.* silk *sāḍī* of black hue) :

It was the silk *sāḍī* of black colour and was a favourite of ladies of fashion and beauty. It was perhaps specially liked by ladies having remarkably fair colour.

(b) *Āgun-Pāṭ-sāḍī* <sup>2</sup> (*lit.* the silk *sāḍī* having flame colour) :

It was once very famous and very extensively used. The flame-coloured cloths mentioned in the Arthurian legends were evidently exported from Bengal. The flame-coloured silk *sāḍī* has been described by Bengali poets of all ages.

(c) *Kāncā-Pāṭ-sāḍī* <sup>3</sup> (*lit.* uncoloured silk *sāḍī*) :

1 কাল নাম লৈতে না দেয় দারুণ খাণ্ডী ।  
কাল হার কাড়ি লয় কালা পাটের সাড়ী ॥

—পদাবলী, বলরাম দাস ।

(The cruel mother-in-law of Rādhā did not allow her daughter-in-law to name the word "Kāla" or black owing to its association with the name of Kṛṣṇa whom she disliked. She was also heartless enough to snatch away Rādhā's azure necklace and *Kāla-Pāṭ-sāḍī* for the very same reason.)

2 (a) বেস্তার পরিধান হবে আশুন পাটের সাড়ী ।

—বানিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

(The harlot would wear the *Āgun-Pāṭ-sāḍī*.)

(b) বাপেতে কিনিয়া দিও অগ্নিশাটের সাড়ী ।

সেই অঙ্গে পইরা থাকি জোয়ার পাছুড়ী ॥

—কাজলরেখা, ময়মনসিংহ গীতিকার, প্রথম খণ্ড, পৃঃ ৩১৮ ।

(My father would buy for me *Āgun-Pāṭ-sāḍī*. O ill luck, I do use now the worthless cotton *Pāchudī*s made by common weavers.)

See also Kamalā, p. 117, and Dewan Bhābhnā, p. 169, Mymensingh Ballads (Bengali Version).

3 খনি বদলে দিব কাঁচা পাটের সাড়ী ।

—বিজয় গুপ্তের মনসাবদল ।

This variety of silk *sāḍī* was not very fine in texture. The widows were once allowed to use it as we read in the *Manasā-maṅgal* poems of Bijay Gupta (15th century).

(d) *Pāṭer-Bhuni* <sup>1</sup> (*lit.* silk Bhuni):

A particular kind of decorated *Pāṭ-sāḍī* was known as *Pāṭer-Bhuni*. It was worn by high class ladies.

The *sāḍīs* or cloths which were made of silk were only used by the rich while there was another kind of cloth named *Khuān*, used generally by the poorer section of the community. It was variously known as *Khauma*, *Khemi*, *Khani* or *Khaiyā* <sup>2</sup> (from Sanskrit *Kshauma*—a linen). This kind of cloth being linen seemed to be made of fibre.

(When *Behulā* of the *Manasā-maṅgal* poems became a widow one of her brothers tried to console her by saying, "We shall allow you to wear *Kāncā-Pāṭ-sāḍī* in place of *Khani* or linen.)

1

পরিতে দিলেন সীতাকে বিচিত্র পাটের ভুনি।

—কুন্তিবাসি রামায়ণ, লঙ্কাকাণ্ড।

(*Śītā* was given to wear a decorated silk *sāḍī* named *Bhuni*.)

2 "কৌমুদিতিপটবস্ত্রে"—অমর and "কেশ অটে হুতুল"—মেদিনী। *কুশা* has two meanings in connection with thread: one is silk and another is শূণ (hemp). Perhaps *খুয়া* referred to the fabrics made of শূণ as found in old Bengali literature.

(a) খৈয়া বাস পরিধানে থাকি নিশাকালে।

রজনীর শীত যোর খণ্ডে রবিজালে ॥

—মাধবাচার্যের চণ্ডীকাব্য।

(*Phullarā*, the fowler-woman, in speaking of her sorrow said, "I spend winter-nights by wearing only a piece of *Khaiyā* and so I have to warm myself only in the day-time.)

(b) খুঞা পরাইয়া পাটশাড়ী কৈল দূর।

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য, বঙ্গবাসী, পৃ: ১৪০।

(The lady was compelled to change *Pāṭ-sāḍī* for *Khuṇā*.)

(c) খুঞে তাঁতি হৈয়া দেহ তসরেতে হাত।

—ভারতচন্দ্রের অন্নদামঙ্গল।

Though common Khuān cloth was worn by the proletariat, yet there was a superior kind which was known as Nalad Khemi. Khanis were usually very strongly woven.

A kind of cloth usually made of silk was called "Neta" and was strongly woven. We know strong cloths (Pāchuḍīs) made of Neta was in use in the days of Kṛttivās (14th century) as we read in his autobiography. The Pāchuḍīs of Neta<sup>1</sup> were not only worn but also served as sheets over carpets even in the royal courts. The words "Nyātā" and "Ṭyānā," meaning a

(Being wearer of ordinary Khuṇā cloth, you dare to handle the 'tasar' or the silk cloth.)

(d) That the Khuṇās were very strongly made may be surmised from the following :—

মোর দেশে এক জাতি, জন কত আছে তাঁতি, বুনিতে অনেকদিন লাগে ।

কেবল ধীরের কাম, বস্ত্র বড় অহুণাম, প্রাণশক্তি টানিলে না ভাঙ্গে ॥

—বিজয় গুপ্তের মনসামঙ্গল ।

(The merchant Chānd in praising the durability of the Khuṇā cloth said, "The weavers in my country produced Khuṇā cloths which require many days of slow and patient labour. These cloths are extremely difficult to be torn off.")

(e) বিচিত্র নলদ খেমি দিয়াছিল তায় ।

—কেতকাদাসের মনসামঙ্গল ।

(The lady was given Khemi sādī of variegated colour.)

<sup>1</sup> (a) আসিনায় পড়িয়াছে রাজা যাজুরি ।

তার উপর পড়িয়াছে নেতের পাছুড়ি ॥

—কুন্তিবাসের আশ্ববিবরণ ।

(On the court-yard of the Lord of Gauḍ was spread the red carpet which was again covered over with a Pāchuḍī of Neta.)

(b) কেহ নেত, কেহ খেত, কেহ পাট সাড়ী ।

—কবিকঙ্কণ, বঙ্গবাসী, পৃঃ ১২৫ ।

(Some put on Netasādī (ordinary silk sādī), some white (cotton ?) sādī and some Pāt-sādī (high class silk sādī).)

piece of rag, may have some connection with the word “Neta.” The expression “Neta” in the sense of silk cloth is still current in Orissa where flags usually made of silk and used on temples are known as “Neta.”

Besides the above the following cloths may be noted :—

(i) Chaṭak dhuti and Maṭak dhuti : <sup>1</sup>

These were cloths worn by men only. Chaṭak dhutis were perhaps coloured or bright as the term “Chaṭak” would signify. Maṭak dhutis might be Maṭkās, a kind of silk cloth of Assam.

(ii) Tasar : <sup>2</sup>

It was also much in use in the past as it is in use even now. The Maṭkā and Tasar are common varieties of silk cloth and are very familiar even to-day as serving various purposes.

<sup>1</sup> চটক ধুতি মটক ধুতি পরিধান করিয়া ।

—মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

(The astrologer wore Chaṭak dhuti and Maṭak dhuti.)

দো ছুটা করিয়া পরে তসরের সাড়ী ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য, বঙ্গবাসী, পৃ: ১৫৩ ।

(The lady wore the Tasar sâḍī in a particular fashion.)

<sup>2</sup> শীত নিবারণ দিষ তসর বসনে ।

—সুশীলার বারমাসী, কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডীকাব্য ।

(We shall ward off the cold with the help of Tasar cloth.)

N.B.—See Silk in India, by Geoghegan. See also among others “A Monograph on the Silk Fabrics in Bengal,” by Nriya Gopal Mukhopadhyay. See also the “Report on an Enquiry into the State of the Tasar Silk Industry in Bengal and the Central Provinces of India,” by the same author.

(iii) Pāṭer-Pāchhḍā : <sup>1</sup>

Pāchhḍās were usually cloths of coarse texture and rather strongly made. Pāṭer-Pāchhḍā or Pāchhuḍi, *i.e.*, coarse cloth made of common silk <sup>2</sup> had two varieties—one kind was used as uḍani, oḍnā or chādar and another kind as usual wear, *i.e.*, loin-cloth.

(iv) Gangājali sādī <sup>3</sup> (*lit.* the Ganges water) :

This sādī bore the name of the Ganges water for its fine texture and white colour. In this respect it might

<sup>1</sup> (a) পাটের পাছড়া পৃষ্ঠে ঘন উড়ে যায় ।

ধড়ার আচল লুটি পায়ে পড়ি যায় ॥

—শ্রীকৃষ্ণবিজয়, মালাধর বসু ।

(The Pāṭer-Pāchhḍā, *i.e.*, silk chādar was seen fluttering over the back while the corner of the cloth was sweeping the ground.)

(b) কেদার খাঁ শিরে ঢালে চন্দনের ছড়া ।

রাজা গোড়েখর দিল পাটের পাছড়া ॥

—কৃষ্ণবাসের আশ্রয়চরিত ।

(The courtier Kedar Khan besprinkled sandal-liquid on the head of the poet Krittivās while the Lord of Gauḍ presented the poet with a piece of Pāṭer-Pāchhḍā, *i.e.*, silk chādar.)

(c) ঘিনে বান্দি নাহি পিন্ধে পাটের পাছড় ।

—মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

(Even the maid-servants would dislike to wear Pāṭer-Pāchhḍā, *i.e.*, coarse silk sādī—so opulent were they.)

(d) বান্দিয়া বাঁশের আগে পাটের পাছড়া ।

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য, বঙ্গবাসী, পৃঃ ১৮৩ ।

(Having tied a Pāṭer-Pāchhḍā, *i.e.*, a piece of silk cloth on a bamboo-staff.)

<sup>2</sup> Some consider Pāṭer-Pāchhḍā as cloth made of jute fibres. They take “Pāṭ” in the sense of jute. But the expression “Pāṭ-Kāpaḍ” is always understood to mean silk cloth.

<sup>3</sup> ক্রীণ কটিদেশ বেড়ি পরে গঙ্গাজলী সাড়ী ।

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল, পদ্মার রূপবর্ণন ।

(The goddess Padmā put around her thin waist the sādī named Gangājali.)

See also the same author—

be compared with the “Abruā” muslins of the Mahomedan period.

(v) Megh-dambur sādī<sup>1</sup> (*lit.* thick patch of cloud) :

This kind of sādī was black as signified by the name. It had some resemblance with the Nilāmbarī of our own day.\*

(vi) Mayūr-Pekham sādī<sup>2</sup> (*lit.* the outspread tail of the peacock) :

The name suggests that it was variegated in colour like the outspread fan of the peacock. We often find reference of this sādī in our folk-literature.

(vii) Āsmān-Tārā<sup>3</sup> (*lit.* the star of the firmament) :

It was a kind of sādī having fine texture and brilliant embroidery. This sādī seemed to be blue in colour resembling that of the sky, as the description would signify.

অপ্সরা যোজনগন্ধা—গঙ্গাজলী সাড়ীতে শরীর আচ্ছাদিয়া ।

(The heavenly Apsarā Yojanagandhā covered her person with the Gangājalī sādī.)

<sup>1</sup> সাধুর স্ত্রী বাছিয়া পরিল মেঘডম্বর কাপড় ।

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য ।

(The wife of the merchant selected and the Megha-dambur sādī wore it.)

\* Ref. of another kind of Sādī called Megha-nāl is found in the Mayanāmātī songs.

<sup>2</sup> ঠাকুরমার ঝুলি—(দক্ষিণা মজুমদার) শীতবসন্ত, পৃ: ৯৩ ।

<sup>3</sup> তারপর পরাইল সাড়ী নামে আসমান তারা ।

ভূমিতে থইলে যেমন ভূয়ে আসমান পরা ॥

হস্তেতে লইলে সাড়ী ঝলমল করে ।

শূন্তেতে থইলে সাড়ী শূন্তে উড়া করে ॥

—ময়মনসিংহ-গীতিকা, দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড, কমলা, পৃ: ১৬০ ।

(Then she was made to wear a kind of sādī named Āsmāntārā. When it was kept on the ground it resembled the sky in appearance. When the sādī was taken in hand it dazzled the eyes. If placed on high it seemed to become invisible.)



(viii) Nīlāmbarī <sup>1</sup> (*lit.* the blue sky) :

It was a kind of blue sādī resembling the colour of the sky. This sādī is much in use even now.

(ix) Hīrāman sādī <sup>2</sup> (*lit.* the bird Hīrāman—a species of parrot) :

It was made very fine in texture and bore the yellowish and variegated colour of the bird Hīrāman.

(x) The following names of sādīs are found in Jagatjiban Ghosāl's Manasā-maṅgal poems and they are described as bearing very good quality and possessing interesting names like other sādīs already referred to :—

(a) Yātrā-sid—Auspicious journey.

(b) Kāpaḍer Rājā—The king of cloths.

(c) Mañjā-phul—As soft and white as the flowers of the kuśa grass.

(d) Agni-phul—The spark of fire.

The description below will show the qualities which each of these sādīs possessed. It will show the perfection which the weaving industry attained in bygone days and may be taken as a specimen of skill which the weavers

<sup>1</sup> মামার ত দিয়াছে কিছারে পাছা নীলাম্বরী ।

জল ভরিতে যায় সুনাইগো কান্ধেতে গাগরী ॥

—দেওয়ান ভাবনা, ময়মনসিংহ-গীতিকা, দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড, পৃঃ ১৬৫ ।

(The maternal uncle bought for the girl Sunāi the three-bordered Nīlāmbarī sādī. With this fine sādī on, Sunāi went out to fetch water with the pitcher on her waist.)

<sup>2</sup> পড়িয়া রহিল তোমার হীরামন সাড়ী ।

পড়িয়া রহিল তোমার জলের গাগরী ॥

—কঙ্ক ও লীলা, ময়মনসিংহ-গীতিকা, প্রথম খণ্ড, পৃঃ ২৯৬ ।

(There lies your Hīrāman sādī. There lies your pitcher for drawing water.)

exhibited in spinning the thread and making the fabric.

<sup>1</sup> To dance in heaven Behulā began to try some sādīs which would suit her best. “First she tried the sādī ‘Jātrā-sid’ (auspicious journey) by name. In it there was embroidery work representing people dancing and singing as in a play. She did not like the sādī and so wore another named ‘the sovereign of sādīs.’ For some reason or other she did not like it and she changed it for another

স্বৰ্গপুৰে বেহুলার বেশবিহ্বাস

কাপড়ের পেটারি বালি আনে টান দিয়া ।

থান কত বস্ত্র তোলে নিচিয়া বাছিয়া ॥

প্রথমে পরেন সাড়ী নামে যাত্রাসিদ ।

নাটুয়ায় নাট করে গায়নে গায় গীত ॥

সে কাপড় পরিয়া বালি আগে পাছে চায় ।

মনোরম্য নহে কাপড় পেটারি পুরায় ॥

তার পাছে পরে কাপড় কাপড়ের রাজা ।

সরুয়া কাকালি রামা মুঠে ধরে মাজা ॥

সে কাপড় পরে বালি আগে পাছে চায় ।

মনোরম্য নহে কাপড় খসিয়া ফেলায় ॥

তার পাছে পরে কাপড় নামে খুণ্ড নেত ।

সরুয়া কাকালি মাজা ভরে বাক্কে ছাচি বেত ॥

সে কাপড় পরিয়া বালি আগে পাছে চায় ।

মনোরম্য নহে কাপড় পেটারি পুরায় ॥

তার পাছে পরে কাপড় নাকর মঞ্জাফুল ।

বাহার হুতার তোলা পঞ্চাশ টাকা মূল ॥

দশীর দিগে লেখা আছে দশ গিরিআবন ।

কুপের দিগে লেখা আছে কালার বৃন্দাবন ॥

কানাইর বৃন্দবনে বালকে বাঁশী বাএ ।

সে সকল গোপাল কৃষ্ণের তামূল যোগায় ।

named 'khuñā-neta. She tied the cloth around her slender waist with the help of a piece of thin cane. It was also not up to her taste and she changed it for the sādī named Mañjā-phul (the Mañjā-flower). This sādī was a very costly one as each 'tola' of thread with which it was woven cost no less than fifty rupees. This sādī had exquisite embroidery work. Its border contained decorations representing hills and forests and the margin breadthwise contained the picture of Vṛndāban in which the cowboys were playing on flutes. Some of them were shown to be supplying Kṛṣṇa with betels. Behulā minutely observed the sādī after wearing it and rejected it also. Then she wore the sādī named 'Agni-phul.' It suited the beauty of Behulā well and she put it on. After minutely observing it she began dancing in joy."

This is not the only instance where we find our ladies making a choice out of many fine sādīs, bearing artistic names, they had in their wardrobes. Such passages are to be found in the ('Mayanāmatir Gān,' in the East Bengal Ballads and many other poems. It undoubtedly proves

সে কাপড় পরিয়া বালি আগে পাছে চায় ।

মনোরম্য নহে কাপড় পেটারি পুরায় ॥

তাহার পাছে পরে সাড়ী নামে অগ্নিফুল ।

কাপড়া স্নন্দরী হুহে হইল সমভুল ॥

সে কাপড় পরিয়া বালি আগে পাছে চায় ।

মনোরম্য হইল কাপড় নাচিয়া বেড়ায় ॥

—অগজ্জীবন বোঝালের মনসামঙ্গল ।

Again in the Rāmāyana, by Kṛtīvās (Laṅkākāṇḍa), we find

"নীল বসন পরিধান তাহে রাজা পাড়ি ।

কত কত লেখা আছে পক্ষ পাকড়ি ॥"

(The blue sādī had red borders containing the representation of various birds.)

that Bengali weavers produced exquisitely wrought cloths of variegated colour and texture—and the mention of these are in perfect accord with the traditional reputation of the country for fine weaving.<sup>1</sup>

The Muslin<sup>2</sup> of Dacca once attained great fame both in the East and the West. The ancient Romans had great liking for it. It was of so fine a texture that the Roman Senators considered the cloth as not suitable for ladies. Objection was taken as it exposed the body. Hence the use of Muslin was stopped by law in ancient Rome—but the ladies were so fond of it, that they often transgressed the law and wore it in spite of the penal punishment which its use involved. The texture was so fine that in the morning if it was spread on the grass, it would perfectly mix with it and if thrown into water it would be quite indistinguishable. These were cotton cloths of extreme fineness but sometimes mixed with silk. The Moghul emperors, specially Jehangir, and his empress Nurjahan, had always been great patrons of this kind of cloth. The production of Muslin shows that the art of weaving retained its perfection of the Hindu days even as late as the later Mahomedan period.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Forbes Watson says :—

(a) "With all our machinery and wondrous appliances, we have hitherto been unable to produce a fabric which for fineness or utility can equal the 'woven-air' of Dacca."

—The Poverty Problem in India, by P. C. Ray, p. 103.

(b) "For over eighteen centuries, European kings, queens and princes, not to speak of Asiatic monarchs, have taken a delight in possessing some of the best specimens of Indian silk manufactures, either pure or worked with gold and silver, such as Chandtara (moon and stars), Mazehar (ripples of silver), Dup-chan (sunshine and shade), Bulbul chasm (nightingale's eyes), Murgala (peacock's neck), and Shikargah (the hunting grounds)."

—The Poverty Problem in India, by P. C. Ray, pp. 88-89.

<sup>2</sup> For an elaborate description about the production of Muslin with all its details, see Taylor's "Topography of Dacca."

There were various kinds of Muslin,<sup>1</sup> a few of which may be noticed below :—

Sangati, Sarbati, Jhunā, Abruā (Abruā would not be distinguished from water if thrown into it), Sarkarali, Malmalkhās, Sabnam (this kind of Muslin if spread on dewy ground would perfectly mix with grass and so would remain quite indistinguishable), Rang, Badankhāsā, Albalta, Tanjeb, Tarandām, Nayansukh (pleasant to the eye), Sarkand, etc.

The embroidered Muslin was known as Kāsīdā. It was made of silk and cotton threads. The Pāgris made from Kāsīdā were once much favoured in Persia and Turkey. The plain Kāsīdā without silk was known as Chikan.

The Muslin which contained very excellent embroidery and workmanship was known as Jāmdāni. These were of different kinds such as Kāretā, Toḍādār, Butidār, Terchhā, Jalbūr, Pānnā-Hājra, Chhāoāl, Dubali-jāl, Mel, etc.

Besides the above, there were striped Muslins of various kinds for different uses, such as, Nandansahi, Anārdānā, Kabutarkhop (Pigeon-hole), Sākutā, Pāchhadār Kundidār, etc.

It is needless to say that the names of different kinds of Muslins had meanings describing the qualities or history of each of them.

Besides the cloths the Kāñchulis too contained artistic decorations and embroidery work. In the Chandī-Kāvya<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See "A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Cotton Manufacture of Dacca in Bengal," by a Former Resident of Dacca.

See also Tavernier's accounts of the Muslin. A piece of Muslin having ten yards in length and one yard in breadth could be passed through the small hole of a ring. Its weight would be less than four tolas.

See also N. N. Banerjee's "Cotton and Woollen Fabrics of Bengal."

<sup>2</sup> For embroidery work on Kāñculis, see pp. 61, 62 and 63 (Goddess Durgā's Kāñculi) as described in the Chandī-kāvya by Kavikankan Mukundarām (Bangabasi Edition). See also pp. 85-86 of Dharmamañgal Poems (Nayāni's Kāñculi), by Manik Ganguli (ed. by H. P. Sāstri and D. C. Sen).

by Kavikaṅkaṇ we read what a nicely-made Kāñchuli was. In the Dharma-maṅgal poems by Rūparām and Māṇik Gāṅguli is found a similar description of such a Kāñchuli.<sup>1</sup> That the Kāñchulis were made costly is evident from such expression as “Lakṣer Kāñchuli.”<sup>2</sup>

Although the society was marked by simplicity in the pre-Mahomedan period, articles of luxury were not altogether unknown among the richer section of the community. Various articles of luxury are referred to in our old Bengali literature, of which only a few are noticed below.

(i) *Fans*.—Fans were not only articles of common use but also articles of luxury with the rich in the days of Hindu rule. We learn of three kinds of artistic and costly fans in the old Bengali literature. These were Daṇḍa-Pākhā, Āber-Pāñkhā, and Lakṣer-Biyani.<sup>3</sup>

(a) Daṇḍa-Pākhā.—Mention is found of this fan as being used by people of fashion and fancy. It was perhaps an artistic fan made from palm-leaves.

(b) Āber-Pāñkhā :<sup>4</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> See also Rūparām's Dharma-maṅgal poems (Nayāni's corset).

<sup>2</sup> See Manasā-maṅgal poems by Jagatjiban Ghosal.

See also Māṇik Gāṅguli's Dharma-maṅgal poems (ed. by H. P. Sāstrī and D. C. Sen), pp. 85-86 (Nayāni's corset) and pp. 35-36 (Ranjā's corset).

<sup>3</sup> গ্রীষ্মকালে বদনত দিমু দণ্ডপাখার বাণ্ড ।

—মানিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

(When Rājā Govinda Chandra's wives were tempting him to stay at home and not to go out as a sannyāsin, they said among others—

“We shall fan your face in summer with ‘Daṇḍa-pākhā’ if you remain at home.)

<sup>4</sup> শুইতে দিছে শীতলপাটা উত্তম বিছান ।

বাতাস করিতে দিছে আবেশ পাঞ্জাখান ॥

—মল্লয়া, ময়মনসিংহ গীতিকা, ১ম খণ্ড, পৃঃ ৫৭ ।

(On the excellent bed the mat known as Sital-pati was spread and the fan of mica known as Āber-pāñkhā was kept on it for use.)

This fan was made of mica as its name signifies. It contained very nice decorations and was very artistically made.

(c) Lakṣer Biyani :<sup>1</sup>—

This Biyani or fan was so costly that it was commonly termed in hyperbolic language as “Lakṣer” or worth a lakh of rupees. A hyperbolic description of this type of fan is found in the Manasā-maṅgal poems of Ketakadās Kṣemānanda. This description at least proves with what admiration the people looked towards it. The poet attributed a fan of this kind to be the outcome of skill and workmanship of the architect-god Viśva-karmā himself. Thus, “The workman (the God Viśva-karmā himself) took directions from Behulā and very willingly made a precious

<sup>1</sup> বেহুলা আদেশে কামিল্য হরিষে  
 লক্ষের বিয়নি গড়ে ।  
 অতি স্নগঠন কৈল আয়োজন  
 চাঁদ চুয়াইয়া পড়ে ॥  
 কামিল্য বন্ধানী গঠিছে বিয়নি  
 শুধু স্বর্ণের ডাটা ।  
 বিয়নি দেখিয়া স্থির নহে হিয়া  
 পবন মানিল ভাটা ॥  
 কি যে অপরূপ সোণার বিম্বক  
 শোভিছে বিয়নি বৃকে ।  
 তাহে ঝলমল সোণার কমল  
 শোভে তার চারি দিকে ॥  
 ভাদ্রি পূর্ণ ইন্দু রচে বিন্দু বিন্দু  
 কনক কুসুম ফুলে ।  
 ভাসু হেন দেখি করে ঝিকি মিকি  
 কিবা দিব সমজ্বলে ॥

fan (*lit.* worth a lakh of rupees<sup>1</sup>). It was nicely made of round shape resembling the moon. Its handle was made of gold. Even the wind-god was afraid of it and bowed to its will at its very sight. There were ornamentation of gold on the fan and the golden lotuses adorned it all around. Its lustre resembled that of the sun. The thread that

সোণার গুণাতে তার চারি ভিতে

বিনোদ বন্ধানে বাধে ।

রাখি পৃথিবীতে বিয়নি দেখিতে

চাঁদ ভূমে যেন কাঁদে ॥

চিত্র মনোহর দেখিতে সুন্দর

লক্ষের বিয়নি খানি ।

আর লিখে তায় বিশেষ উপায়

পূৰ্ণ পরিচয় বাণী ॥

চাঁদ সদাগর সোণকা বাণ্যানী

লিখেন তাহার বাড়ী ।

ছয় পুত্র তার চিত্র কৈল আর

ঘরে ছয় বধু রাড়ী ॥

নগর নিবাসি এ পাট পরশী

লিখি প্রতি জনে জনে ।

সাতালি পূৰ্বতে লোহার বাসরে

বেহলা লখাইর সনে ॥

লিখে এই সব শোক কলরব

বেহলা ভাসিয়া যায় ।

লক্ষের বিয়নি কামিল্যা আপনি

এত চিত্র কৈলা তায় ॥

<sup>1</sup> The word lakh in those days did not specify any exact numerical figure that it literally denotes. We find it so often used in this sense that we can safely take it to mean, large, valuable, etc. The crowd consisting "of a lakh of people" (Chaitanya-Bhāgavata, Ādikhaṇḍa) should not be taken too literally. It simply means very large. So a lakh of rupees means the great value of the article but not literally a lakh.



was used in the fan was golden. When kept on the ground the fan seemed to put the moon weeping (for its inferior beauty). The fan was a valuable one and was full of pictorial decorations. It served as Lakṣmindra and Behulā's introduction to their family by painting their early lives. It showed the six sons of the merchant Chānd with their wives. Their very neighbours of the town were also painted on it. There was to be found on the fan the picture of the steel-house built on the Sonthal hill in which dwelt the pair (Behulā and Lakṣmindra) on the fateful night. There was painted the mournful sight of Behulā moving on the frail barge with her dead husband. The workman gave so much details of Chānd's household that he did not miss with him his servant Neḍā and his maid-servant Jhāuā. The workman with great joy then made the golden handle of the fan and finally presented it to Lakṣmindra."

(ii) The *combs*<sup>1</sup> of various descriptions were made of mica. Many artistic things were made of mica such as

চাঁদ সদাগর                      নেড়াত নফর  
আর লিখে ঝাউয়া চেড়ী ।

কামিল্যা উল্লাস                  করিতে বাতাস  
গঠিল সোণার ডাঁড়ী ॥

কামিল্যা তথাই                  বলিছে লখাই  
শুন তোরা এক ভাবে ।

লক্ষের বিয়নি                  গড়্যা দিল আনি  
ইহাতে সকলি পাবে ॥

—কেতকাদাসের মনসামঙ্গল ।

'    আবের কঁাকই লইল রাজা আবের চিরুণি ।  
    আবেতে রাঙ্গিয়া লইল খাড়ি আর বিউনি ॥

combs, fans, baskets, etc. Besides these there were ivory dice and “Gaja-mati” (a kind of pearl said to be found in elephant-heads) garlands used as articles of luxury by the rich.

(iii). *The Śaṅkhas* (or the conch-shell bangles).—The conch-shells have always been used in the form of bangles by ladies of Hindu society, as a sign of leading conjugal lives with their husbands alive. Three types of these shell-bangles seemed to be much in favour with them in the past. One type was known as the *Lakṣmībilās Śaṅkha*,<sup>1</sup> another was known as *Muṭh Śaṅkha*,<sup>2</sup> while the other type was known as the *Kulupiyā Śaṅkha*.<sup>3</sup> The conch-shells used for this and various other purposes seemed to be sea-shells imported to this province chiefly from the Madras coast, Ceylon and the Malayas, as these are done even now. The conch-shells that are brought into this country are of various kinds and various qualities. The

হাতীর দাঁতের পাটি লইল প্রজমতি মালা ।

ডেট দিতে নবাবের করিল যে মেলা ॥

—রূপবতী, ময়মনসিংহ-গীতিকাঁ, পৃ: ২২৮ ।

(The Rājā took with him the combs made of mica and baskets and fans coated with mica. He also took with him ivory dice and Gajamati garlands. All these the Rājā took with him as presents for the Nawab.)

লক্ষ্মীবিলাস শঙ্খ সাড়ী বস্ত্র ভালা ।

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঞ্জল, পৃ: ৪৭৬ [(D. Chakravorti's ed.).

(The Lakṣmībilās Śaṅkhas and good Sāḍīs.)

২ লক্ষ টাকার মুঠ শাঁখা মস্তকে ভাঙ্গিল ।—মণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

(The queen dashed against her head and broke her “Muṭh” Śaṅkha worth a lakh of rupees.)

৩ পরে দিব্য পাটি সাড়ী কণক রচিত চুড়ী

ছই করে কুলুশিয়া শঙ্খ ।

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য (বঙ্গবাসী) পৃ: ১৫২ ।

(The lady wore fine silk sādī, golden bracelets, and Kulupiyā bangles in two hands.)

best of them besides Surāti, Duānāpati and Ālābilā which come from Bombay-side are now imported from Ceylon and are known as the “*Tit-Cowrie*” śaṅkhas. Next in quality are the “*Pati*” śaṅkhas which come from Setubandha Rāmeśvar in the south of the Madras Presidency. The “*Jāhāji*” śaṅkhas or the conch-shells which are imported to Bengal in ships from various places are inferior to the above two and may be ranked in the third class. The “*Garbānki*” Śaṅkhas which are brought in from the Madras-side are of the worst quality and may be termed as the fourth class Śaṅkhas. Dacca has always been famous for her fine workmanship in preparing shell-bracelets.

(iv) *The chāmars (chowries).*—Chowries have always been favoured in this country in all ages as articles of luxury. In religious and ceremonial occasions too chowries have been found to be indispensable. Whence Bengal imported this article is not known, but the poets of Manasā-maṅgal poems have described it as imported from overseas. Whether there is any truth in the description we do not know. But in the present days these are imported into Bengal and other parts of India from the Himalayan regions in large quantities. The Yāk tails of these mountainous tracts supply very good chowries. There were three kinds of chowries mentioned in the old Bengali literature, *e.g.*, (1) Dhabal-chāmar,<sup>1</sup> (2) Hāḍiyā-chāmar,<sup>2</sup> and <sup>3</sup>(3) Gaṅgājali-

<sup>1</sup> পাট শল বদলে ধবল চামর পাব ।—কবিকঙ্কণচণ্ডী (বঙ্গবাসী), পৃ: ২২৩ ।

(The merchant Dhanapati said that he would get white chowry in exchange for the jute and hemp.)

<sup>2</sup> কত বা নেতের উড়ে পতাকা স্নন্দর ॥

তাহার উপরে বান্ধে চামর পঙ্গাজল ।—দ্বিজ কমললোচনের চণ্ডীকাব্য ।

(There were many nice-looking pennons fluttering in the wind over which there was attached a Gaṅgājali chowry.)

<sup>3</sup> চতুর্দিকে লাগাইল হাড়ীয়া চামর ।—দ্বিজ কমললোচনের চণ্ডীকাব্য ।

Around the chariot were fixed the Hāḍiyā chowries.)

chāmar. The names of (1) and (3) signify that they were white in colour. The name of (2) leads us to think that it was perhaps chiefly made by the Hāḍī caste and was black in colour.

(v) *Umbrellas*.<sup>1</sup>—Umbrellas made with cloth usually called Meghdambur was once a fashion in the country. This kind of cloth had a variety which was worn as sālī as mentioned previously. The name suggests the black colour of the cloth.

(vi) *Shoes*.<sup>2</sup>—Silver and velvet footwear were once in vogue among the aristocracy. It is not known whether these were rarely or extensively used by the rich of this country.

(vii) *Blankets*.<sup>3</sup>—Blankets of various kinds were in use. Of these 'Indra-kambal' was perhaps the best and was in

হাড়িয়া চামর হাতে (Having Hāḍiyā chowry in hand)—Bāṇśidāsa's Manasū-maṅgal (the dance of the Apsarās). The word "হাড়িয়া" is difficult to explain. The expression "হাড়িয়া কোণে মেঘ" means black cloud of the north-west part of the sky which signifies storm in Bengal. The Hāḍī caste has a low status and the persons of this caste are usually of dark complexion. This may have something to do with the expression "হাড়িয়া" (meaning black). . Has it any connection with the used (and hence) black pot?

<sup>1</sup> মেঘ ডব্বর ছত্র ধরিলেক তুলি ।

দুইপাশে খেত চামরের ঢুলাঢুলি ।—মনসামঙ্গল (যষ্ঠিধর) ।

(Upon the head of the merchant's son was outspread the Meghdambur umbrella and on his two sides were two men fanning him with two white chowries.

<sup>2</sup> (i) রক্ত পাছকার চাঁদ দিলেন চরণ ।—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল ।

(The merchant Chānd put on his feet the silver ornamented footwear. We may suggest that this reference to রক্ত পাছকা does not imply 'shoes' but sandals. The comparatively wealthy people used to put sandals decorated with silver and not all wooden.

(ii) খাসা মখমলি পাছকা পায় ।—রামনারায়ণের ধর্মমঙ্গল ।

(Good velvet shoes were worn.)

<sup>3</sup> (i) শুদ্ধ যে সকল বস্ত্র রক্তকম্বল । (বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল, ডিঙ্গা বোঝাই করা) ।

(Among the good fabrics the red blankets.)

use among the rich and fashionable society. There was also the red blankets (রক্তকম্বল) in use among the rich. Besides this there were two other kinds known as Khosālā and Bhoṭ-kambal meant for the poor.

(viii) *Carpets*. <sup>1</sup>—Carpets were also in fashion in the past as these are now even to this day. We know Persian carpets were much valued in this country during the Moslem rule.

(ii) সাটীর উপর পাটী বিছায় এক বুক উছল ।

তার উপর ফেলাইয়া দিল ইন্দ্রকম্বল ॥

(In making a bed, a bedsheet was first put, upon which was spread a mat. Then upon it was spread an Indra-kambal or blanket.)—Reference about গলাজলি পাটী and various other costly things of luxury may be found in the *Chandikāvya* of Kavikaukaṇ (Dhanapati Story), p. 204 (Baṅgabāsi ed.)

iii) The poor men used Khosālā. Thus :—

হরিণ বদলে পাই পুরাণা খোসালা ।

(‘For the skin of a deer I get old Khosālā for my wrapper,’ said the fowler-woman Phullarā).

(iv) ভোট কম্বল প্রতি প্রভু চাহে বারেবার ।

—চৈতন্য-চরিতামৃত, মধ্যখণ্ড, পৃঃ ২০ ।

(Chaitanya repeatedly looked towards the Bhoṭkambal.)

Bhoṭkambal and Bhuṭī might have been the same kind of blanket.

বস্তা হনে খসাইল ভুটী ভরা তাও ।

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল, বেসাতি ।

(From the sack was taken out pieces of the Bhuṭī.)

<sup>1</sup> দুলিচা গালিচা লহ বিচিত্র বিছানা ।

(Take with us the carpets of different kinds and decorated bedding.)

রাজা কৈল অঙ্গীকার

ভিন্ন সাধু বসিবার

দুলিচা ফেলাইয়া দিল আগে ।

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল, সিংহলরাজের সহিত চাঁদের সাক্ষাৎ ।

(The king agreed and at his command a Dulichā was spread for the merchant to sit upon.)

(ix) *Canopies* (*Shāmiānās*).<sup>1</sup>—The *Shāmiānās*, or *Chāndoās* as they were called, were decorated with many artistic designs. They were perhaps costly articles used on ceremonial occasions.

(x) *Sheep*.<sup>2</sup>—The fighting sheep were perhaps much valued in old days. These were trained, it seems to us, even in the pre-Mahomedan days. It was very current in the days of Moghul rule. Even now it obtains in many parts of the land.

(xi) *Horses*.<sup>3</sup>—Horses were imported from foreign countries and formed part of the luxury of the rich. These

১ কারুয়া টাঙ্গাইয়া করে ঘর মনোহর ।

—কমলা, ময়মনসিংহগীতিকা, পৃ: ১৪৯, ২য় খণ্ড ।

(The room was made beautiful to look by spreading a *Karuā* or artistically decorated *shāmiānā*.)

পাটের চাদোয়া শোভে মাথার উপর ।

—কুন্তিবাসের আত্মবিবরণ ।

(Silk-*Shāmiānā* adorned the roof.)

২ রাজভেট নিল সাধু যুঝারিয়া ভেড়া ।

পার্কৃত্য টাঙ্গন তাজী লৈল ছই বোড়া ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী, বঙ্গবাসী, পৃ: ১৩২ ।

(For presentation to the king, the merchant took with him a fighting sheep and two horses of Hilly or *Tāngan* and Arab or *Tāji* type.)

৩ ইরাণী টাঙ্গন তাজী

সুরঙ্গ কামোদা বাজী

সিন্ধদেশী তুরঙ্গ বিশাল ।

—মাধবাচার্যের চণ্ডীকাব্য ।

(The horses of Iranian, *Tāngan* or Hilly, *Tāji* or Arab, *Suranga*, *Kāmodā* and *Sindh* extraction were sent to the battle-field. The *Sindh*-horses were very big in size.)

In *Kavikāṅkan-Chandī* we find the merchant *Dhanapati*, in his list of articles for import, mentioned also horses.

were given in presentation. Besides, for common use, a good horse was a necessity in the past, as a means for easy transportation and warfare.

(xii) *Stones*.<sup>1</sup>—The rich men of the country imported precious stones of various colours to decorate the garments, ornaments and buildings. Artificial plants, birds and flowers would be made of them as we find described by Dwija Kamala-Lochana in his *Chandikā-vijaya* and by Bhārat Chandra in his celebrated *Annadāmaṅgal*. Bengal might have manufactured glass even in the days of Hindu rule and got stones, specially blue-stones, in their stead from foreign countries. Among all kinds of precious stones the blue-stones seem to be most favoured.

(xiii) *Bedsteads*.<sup>2</sup>—Bedsteads of gold were described by many poets from the oldest to the latest. The description

He says—

কুরঙ্গ বদলে                      তুরঙ্গ পাব  
নারিকেল বদলে শঙ্খ ।

—কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী (বঙ্গবাসী), পৃ: ২২৩ ।

(I shall get horses in exchange for the deer and the conch-shells in exchange for the cocoanut-fruits.)

<sup>1</sup> কাচের বদলে নীলা ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য (বঙ্গবাসী), পৃ: ২২৩ ।

(Dhanapati the merchant, expected to import Nilā or emeralds in exchange for the ordinary glass.)

<sup>2</sup> নেত্রারে ছানী খাট ধরে নানা রঙ্গ ।

দীঘে পাশে মাপি দিবা সোণার পালঙ্গ ॥

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল (বেসান্তি) ।

(In place of charpoys covered with tapes of different types you will have to give in exchange golden bedsteads of equal sizes.) Our folk literature contains profuse descriptions of these golden bedsteads. See *Thākurmār-jhuli* (D. Majumdar), p. 58, Ghumantapuri. See also the story of *Mālanchamālā* (*Thākurdādār Jhuli*). See also *Mymensingh Ballads*, the story of *Maluā* (p. 78, Bengali version) and *Kājalrakhā* (p. 322, Bengali version.)

might not be all poetic fancy. The bedding used on them were probably very costly and excellent. Pillows made with mustard seeds were sometimes used as we learn from our folk-literature and they were regarded as a piece of luxury.

(xiv)<sup>1</sup> The following kinds of fabrics were once very famous :—

(a) খেস (rough cloths, cotton Pāchhrās, still in use in Tipperah-side as bed-sheet and winter-cloth).

(b) খুঞ (Khuā fabrics).

(c) ভুটী (Bhutan blankets or Bhot blankets).

(d) নেত (Silk fabrics).

(e) মকমল (velvets).

(f) রক্তকম্বল (red-blankets).

(xv) *Mosquito-curtain.*<sup>2</sup>—The mosquito-curtains were once made to suit the golden bedsteads. Among the articles of luxury, mosquito-curtains were always mentioned by the poets. In Mymensingh ballads is to be found a kind of these curtains named chānduā-curtains. These curtains were sometimes made with silk-cloth.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> সমার প্রধান ডিঙ্গা নামে টিয়ার্টু টি ।

পুর্বে যাতে ভরিছিল খেস খুঞ ভুটী ॥

নেত কথিবায় ভর সিতি মকমল ।

গুজু বে সকল বস্ত্র রক্তকম্বল ॥

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল ( ডিঙ্গা বোঝাই করা ) ।

(The Tiathunti—*lit.* the parrot-beaked—was the chief vessel filled previously with Khes, Khui or Khuā and Bhuti. It was partly filled with silk fabric and partly with velvet fabric and woollen blankets of red colour.)

<sup>2</sup> খাট পালঙ্ক আছে কত চান্দুয়া মশারী ।

—ময়মনসিংহগীতিকার, ১ম খণ্ড, কাজলরেখা, পৃ: ৩২২ ।

(In the house there was no want of costly bedsteads and chānduā-curtains.)

<sup>3</sup> মশা নিবারিতে দিব পাটের মশারি ।

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য, স্থলীলার বারমাসী ।

(‘I shall give you silken mosquito-curtain to ward off the mosquitoes,’ said the Princess Susilā to her husband.)



(xvi) *The mats.*<sup>1</sup>—The mats known as the *śital-pāti* were once very famous as mentioned previously. These were very artistically made and used on the beds of the rich and fashionable. The workmanship still exists to some extent in the countryside of Bengal, specially of East Bengal. A kind of these mats was called “*Gangājali-pāti.*”

(xvii) *Piḍis or seats.*<sup>2</sup>—Reference of *piḍis* made with gold are often to be met with in our old literature. Those made with suitable wood such as of *Kānthāl* (jack-wood) and *Māndār* (the coral tree, *Erythrina fulgens*) were also articles of luxury.

<sup>1</sup> The mats *śital-pāti* sometimes had artistic decorations of flowers, as the following line would signify :—

চাঁপানাগেশ্বর পাটী কাঠের চৌদল ।

নানা চিত্রাবলী তাতে আঁকিছে সকল ॥

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল, বেসাতি ।

(The mat known as *Chāpā-nageswar* (*lit.* two kinds of flowers) and the wooden palanquin (*choudal*) contained many pictorial representations.)

শীতলপাটী বিছাইয়া দিয়ু বালিসে হেলন পাও ।

—মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

(Said the Queen to the Raja—“ We shall spread *śital-pāti* on which you will sit leaning on a pillow.”)

ভইতে দিছে শীতল পাটী উত্তম বিছান ।

—মল্লয়, ময়মনসিংহগীতিকা, ১ম খণ্ড, পৃঃ ৫৭ ।

(A good bed with a piece of *śital-pāti* on it was given for use.) *শীতল পাটী* (*lit.* it means the mat which keeps the body cool): For *Gangājali-pāti* see *Kavikankan* *Mukundarām's Chandikāvya* (Bangabasi ed.), p. 204.

See also *Rupavati*, *Mym. Ballads*, Part I, p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> (a) বহুবায় করি কড়ি করিলাম খাট পিড়ি ।

—কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী, বঙ্গবাসী, পৃঃ ১২০ ।

(With much cost I made the bedstead and *Piḍis* or seats.)

(b) উত্তম কাঁঠালের পিড়ি ঘরেতে পাতিল ।

—ময়মনসিংহগীতিকা (কাজলরেখা), ১ম খণ্ড, পৃঃ ৩১৫ ।

(Very good seat made of jack-wood was kept on the floor for use.)

(xviii) *Looking-glass*.<sup>1</sup>—Looking-glasses were made with much care to suit the fancy of the rich. These were sometimes adorned with gold and so made costly. These were quite possible as the glass was once extensively manufactured in India and in Bengal particularly. The hint of glass trade as given in the list of merchandise of Dhanapati by Kavikankan is sufficiently indicative of this.

(xix) *The Dolā (a kind of palanquin)*.—Palanquins were ordinarily taken recourse to specially by the wealthy for moving from place to place. These were sometimes made in a way befitting the luxurious ways of the rich. The following description will show the outfit of a richly furnished palanquin :—

<sup>2</sup> “ The merchant Dhanapati’s attendant managed to make the proper equipment of the palanquin to be used by his master. The handles were made with gold and gems duly besprinkled with liquid sandal. The roof of the palanquin was covered with a piece of thick silk.

(c) হুন্দর পিড়িঙলা মান্দারের সার।

—মনসামঙ্গল, বেসাতি, বংশীদাস (ঘারিকা চক্রবর্তী)।

(These good seats made of choice coral wood.)

<sup>1</sup> বাম করে হেম দণ্ড কনক দর্পনী।

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য, বঙ্গবাসী, পৃ: ১৫৪।

(On the left hand there was the golden looking-glass with the golden handle.)

<sup>2</sup> কিঙ্করে করিয়া দিল দোহার সাজন।

বিবিধ প্রকারে বাদ্য বাজায় বাজন ॥

বক্শের শীজা কুড়া কণক আকুড়া।

হীরামুখী নামে বার চন্দনের কুড়া ॥

উপরে ছায়নী দিল পাটের পাছোড়া।

চারিদিকে নাখে গজমুকুতার ঝারা ॥

Precious gems (fabulously said to be found in elephants) decorated its skirts. Peacock-feathers were used to adorn the palanquin. The silk-tufts around it gave it a dazzling look. The merchant sat on the palanquin leaning on one side and both on his right and on his left his attendants were fanning him with chowries.”

(xx) The following description of a *chariot*<sup>1</sup> will give us some idea of the luxury enjoyed by the rich in the days of the Hindu rule. Whether the chariots in bygone days were adorned in the way mentioned here or not, the description inspite of occasional poetic exaggerations tallies with the indigenous artistic designs to be found in a rich man's drawing room. The use of golden vases, chowries, and imitation trees and flowers made of gems are some of the items of luxury of old days. In the Annadāmaṅgal

ময়ূরের পাখে বার লেগেছে ছিটুনি ।

বেলন পাটের ধোপা সর্বঙ্গ দাপনী ॥

দোলার উপরে সদাগর হেলে গা ।

ডানি বামে পড়ে ষ্ঠেত চামরের বা ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য, বঙ্গবাসী, পৃ: ২২৩ ।

For silk-covered palanquins see also Kavikankan Mukundarām's Chandikāya, Bangabāsi ed., p. 125.

- <sup>1</sup> কাঞ্চনের দণ্ড ধ্বজ রথের উপর ।  
কত বা নেতের উড়ে পতাকা স্তম্ভর ॥  
তাহার উপরে বান্ধে চামর গঙ্গাজল ।  
রত্ন প্রবাল লাগে করে ঝলমল ॥  
নেতের ওয়ারি দিল তাহার উপর ।  
স্থানে স্থানে দণ্ডে লাগে অমূল্য পাথর ॥  
রূপার আওয়াস রথে করে ঝলমল ।  
শরতে প্রকাশ যেন গগনমণ্ডল ॥  
কাঞ্চনের যুদ্ধঘরা তাহাতে তুলিল ।  
বহুবিধ ধনে তাহা স্তম্ভ করিল ॥

(18th century) by Bhāratchandra such descriptions of artificial flowers and bees made of precious stones are to be found.

“The chariot contained the standard and festoons, made of silk-cloth and gold. A white chowry was fitted upon the standard. The flagstaff contained gems and corals of all descriptions. The chariot was covered with cotton cloth and the staffs which supported the cover contained valuable stones here and there. The seat of the hero in the chariot was made of silver. Its whiteness resembled the moonlit night of autumn. A vase full of gems and valuables was placed on the chariot. Besides the various poles supporting the roof were made of gold and these were tied down with the help of silver strings. A black-bordered cotton-cloth covered the chowry which adorned the top of the chariot. A vase was put on the roof and crystal columns with variegated stones adorned the inside. Besides the blue, black, yellow and white stones, there were also mirrors and diamonds which bedecked the precious columns. The space which the chariot contained was all dazzling gold. On all sides it contained a particular kind of chowry called Hāḍiyā-chāmar. The posts were bedecked

সোণার সাঁড়কে রুয়া সোণার ছাটনি ।  
 রজতের গুণে তাতে তুলিল বান্ধনি ॥  
 আঁকারী পারিয়া নেতে ছাইছে চামরে ।  
 কনক কলস দিল চালের উপরে ॥  
 ফটকের স্তম্ভ দিল ভবন মাঝার ।  
 নানাবর্ণে শিলা দিল মধ্যে মধ্যে তার ॥  
 নীল কুম্ভ পীত স্তম্ভ যে পাথর ।  
 ঝলক দর্শন তাহে দেখিতে সুন্দর ॥  
 হীরার বুথকা তাহে দেখি সুশোভন ।  
 এক স্তম্ভ লাগাইল পঞ্চরাজার ধন ॥

with pearl-garlands which illumined the dark inside. The precious gems literally made the cabin of the warrior as dazzling as the sun. The chariot was big enough (*lit.* two miles) to contain reservoirs of water for the thirsty people.

“The water was clear as crystal. The sides of the tank contained trees all made of gold with their fruits made of gems. On the water was kept golden lotuses upon which the aquatic birds, the swans and the bees, were represented as rushing in to gather honey. Even the elephants were shown as plunging in the water to eat the lotus-stems and making deep sounds causing a feeling of alarm. The charioteer bedecked the chariot with gold and also adorned it with a flower-garden containing representations of sweet-scented flowers of all descriptions.”

### *Exchange and General Conditions of Life.*

During the early Hindu period and up to the beginning of Mahomedan rule the general method of buying and selling was conducted by a system of barter, though there was a medium of exchange in the shape of cowries and copper coins for smaller, and gold and silver coins for bigger transactions. The Bengalis carried their system of barter even to foreign countries which was commonly

সুবর্ণ আওয়াস ঘরে করে ঝলমল ।  
 চতুর্দিক লাগাইল হাড়ীয়া চামর ॥  
 তাহাতে লম্বিত গজমুকুতার ঝারা ।  
 অন্ধকার মধ্যে যেন দীপ্ত করে তারা ॥  
 মধ্যে মধ্যে লাগে হীরা মুকুতা খিচনি ।  
 বৃদ্ধ-বর-আভা যেন দেখি দিনমনি ॥  
 রথের উপরে কৈল যায়্য সর্বোবর ।  
 তৃষ্ণাভুর হৈতে তাথে খাইতে চাহে জল ॥

termed as “Badal-Bānijya.” In the later Hindu period when trade declined, the Hindu merchants became notorious for their dishonesty. The picture of Murāri Sil in the Chandikāvya and that of the merchant mentioned in the story of Śaṅkhamālā<sup>1</sup> show that the Hindu merchants in the declining days of their commercial activities had lost their traditional integrity. Individuals, communities and nations—all lose their honesty on the eve of their downfall.

In the seventeenth century the common currency in Bengal was represented by the cowries, dāmdis and the dāms, besides the sikkās. Though the ratio between the dāmdis and dāms varied at different times still on the whole eight dāmdis were taken to be equal to one dām, and forty

প্রহর-প্রমাণ কৈল মায়া সরোবর ।  
 ফটিক আকৃতি দেখি তার মধ্যে জল ॥  
 কাঞ্চনের তরু তীরে শোভে মনোহর ।  
 তাহাতে শোভিছে সব মাণিকের ফল ॥  
 বারি মধ্যে পদ্ম পুষ্প ফুটিছে বিস্তর ।  
 উড়ে পরে কেলি করে পক্ষী জলচর ॥  
 রাজহংসগণ চরে দেখিতে সুন্দর ।  
 কনক কমল দলে পড়িছে ভ্রমর ॥  
 মৃগাল খাইতে তাতে নাষিছে কুঞ্জর ।  
 ঘোর নাদ করে তাতে শুনি ভয়ঙ্কর ॥  
 সারথি করিল রথ কাঞ্চনে নিৰ্ম্মাণ ।  
 নানারূপ করে তাতে পুষ্পের উদ্গান ॥

—বিজ কমললোচনের চণ্ডীকাবিক্রয় (ধূলোলোচনের শুদ্ধসজ্জা) ।

See Kavikankan's Chandikāvya (Bangabasi ed.), pp. 73-74.

<sup>1</sup> See the story of Śaṅkhamālā collected by Dakshināranjan Mitra Majumdar in Thākurdādār Jhulī, p. 221 :

কোনও বেনে দারুচিনি দিতে দরমুজ বাহির করে ।  
 কোনও বেনে কাহনের বস্ত্র বেচে সিক্কার দরে ॥

dāms were equal to one sikkā rupee, dāms and dāmdis were copper coins.

It goes without saying that the articles in the market were far cheaper in olden times. In the 15th century the whole marriage ceremony of Chaitanya Dev was performed with a few cowries and this was referred to as a magnificent instance of costly marriage by the poets who described it.<sup>1</sup> A century earlier, Krittivās, the celebrated poet of the Rāmāyanas, was satisfied with a piece of Pāter-Pāchrā (a kind of coarse silk cloth) from the Lord of Gauḍa while a century later Kavikankan spoke highly of "Jagannāthi" sheet which, we think, also was not cloth of a very fine quality. In the latter part of the 16th century, the condition of society was equally simple as may be gleaned from Mādhavāchāryya's Chandikāvya.

Though the articles were very cheap and the people, generally speaking, lived simple lives, yet luxury in all profusion characterised the aristocracy. The princes and merchants were lavish in their expenditure over luxuries. We find in the Maynāmati songs that even boys of ordinary families were accustomed to play with golden balls. In the Manasāmangal poems<sup>2</sup> there are references to grand processions and of very costly articles during the wedding ceremonies of the merchant class as described by the poets in a somewhat hyperbolic strain. This, of course,

কোনও বেনে পাধরের টুকরা ঝাপিঁতে ভরিয়া থোয় ।

মহামানিক্য মহামানিক্য বলে লোকেরে বিকয় ॥

("There are some merchants who produce 'darmuj,' a kind of poisonous wood, and falsely name it cinnamon before the customers, while there are some who sell articles worth a kāhan for a sikkā. Some have their baskets full of pieces of common stones and sell them as valuable gems.")

<sup>1</sup> See Chaitanya-Bhāgavat (Adikhaṇḍa) by Vrindāvan Dās, fol. 95-96, C. U. MS. No. 472.

<sup>2</sup> See Pandit Jānakināth's Manasāmangal, C. U. MS. No. 1357, Folia 90-93.

refers more to the condition of Bengal during pre-Mahomedan days when the society was more or less under the Buddhistic influence. Perhaps it was due to the Brāhmanic ideal of renunciation at a later period that the society became gradually more simple.

The following lines from Kavikankan's Chandikāvya may be noted as an illustration of cheapness of articles in bygone days :—

“The maid-servant Durvalā went to the market with the carriers and fifty kāhans of cowries..... She bought long gourds (*Cucurbita lagenaria*) and green pumpkin gourds. Pieces of these vegetables she bought at the rate of a hundred. She bought ripe mangoes the price of which she settled at the rate of baskets. She bought posset at the rate of a vis (perhaps twenty gandās, *i.e.*, one anna per seer) and betel-leaves at the rate of a “pan” (*i.e.*, one anna). She also did not forget to buy the sugar-candy called the navāt. She paid ten pans (*i.e.*, ten annas for a live rabbit. She bought very big and delicious Rohit fish (*Cyprinus*).  
\* \* \* She also bought other fishes such as the Chital and the Sheat fish (Boāl). She then bought 64 (*lit.* 16 pans) lobsters. The clever maid-servant bought a castrated goat with eight kāhans of cowries, *i.e.*, eight rupees.

দুর্বলার বেসাতি ।

দুর্কলা হাটেরে যায়,                      পশ্চাতে কিঙ্কর ধায়  
কাহন পঞ্চাশ লগ্না কড়ি ।

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*                      \*

লাউ কিনে কচি কুমড়া,                      শঙ মূলে পলা কড়া  
পাকা আত্র কিনে ঝুড়ি-মূলে ।

বিশা দরে ছেনা কিনি                      কিনিল নবাত চিনি  
গণ্যে পণ মূলে পাণ নিলে ।



Mustard oil she bought at the rate of ten buḍis, *i. e.*, 10 pice per seer," etc., etc.

The articles as may be noticed here were all for consumption in the dinner and represented purchases of a rich family. Mustard oil selling at 10 pice per seer might be contrasted with its modern price which is 6 to 8 annas a seer.

Similar pictures of cheapness and simple living even amidst description of luxury are also given in the works of the pre-Mahomedan period or relating to it, such as the earlier Śivāyanas and the Maynāmati songs.

How cheap things were may be evident from the following list which contains articles purchased on account of a marriage ceremony in a rich zemindar family of Mymensingh only about 131 years ago<sup>1</sup> :—

শ্রীশ্রীতুর্গা

সন ১২১১

হিসাব জিনিষ খরিদ হাট সাহাগঞ্জ ।

তেরিখ ২৮ জ্যৈষ্ঠ ।

| আসামী               | জিনিস | রোপৈয়া | কোড়ি |
|---------------------|-------|---------|-------|
| হরিদ্রা (Turmeric)  | ১/২   | ...     | ১৮০   |
| সিন্দুর (Vermilion) | ১ দফা | ...     | ৮১০   |

মূল দিয়া পণ দশ      কিনিল জীবন্ত শশ  
জরঠ কমঠ কিনে রুই ।

\*      \*      \*      \*      \*  
রন্ধন সন্ধান জানে      চিতল বোয়ালি কিনে  
শোল পনা কিনিল চিগড়ী ।

চতুর সাধুর দাসী      আট কাহনেতে খাসী  
তৈল সের দরে দশ বুড়ি ॥

ইত্যাদি । কঃ কঃ চণ্ডীকাব্য (বঙ্গবাসী), পৃঃ ১৫৫-১৫৬ ।

<sup>1</sup> See মরমনসিংহের বিবরণ by Kedar Majumdar.

| আসামী  | জিনিস      | রোপৈয়া | কোড়ি |
|--|------------|---------|-------|
| চুণ (Lime)   | /২৥ সের    | ...     | /১০   |
| পান (Betel-leaf)   | ২০ কুড়ি   | ...     | ১৥০   |
| তামাক (Tobacco)  | /১         | ...     | /০    |
| ডিঙ্গাকলা (Banana of Dingā class)                                  | ১ ছুড়ি    | ...     | ৮২/০  |
| মরিচ (Chilli)  | /২ সের     | ...     | ১২/০  |
| মাসকলাই (the pulse or kidney bean :<br><i>Phaseolus radiatus</i> ) | /৫         | ...     | ১১৮/০ |
| মসলা (Spices)  | ১ দফা      | ...     | ৮/১০  |
| দাইল (Split peas or pulse)   | /৭৥ সের    | ...     | ১২/১০ |
| লবণ (Salt)   | /৭ সের     | ...     | ৪১৮/০ |
| চিনি (Sugar)   | /৭ সের     | ...     | ১/১০  |
| আমলি (Tamarind)  | /২৥ সের    | ...     | ২/১৫  |
| ডাব (young cocoanut)   | ৫টা        | ...     | ৮/১০  |
| কাড়ুলা  | ২টা        | ...     | ৮/০   |
| পাতিল (Earthen pots)   | ৫টা        | ...     | /১৭৥০ |
| ”  | ২টা        | ...     | /১০   |
| তেজপাতা (Cassia leaves)  | ১ দফা      | ...     | /০    |
| টিকিয়া (small cakes of charcoal-dust)                             | ১ দফা      | ...     | /০    |
| বাঁশ (Bamboo)  | ১ দফা      | ...     | ১৮০   |
| পাট (Jute)   | ১১০ সের    | ...     | ২/১৫  |
| সন্ধুক লবণ (Rock salt)   | ”          | ...     | ১৮    |
| ডিম (Eggs)   | ১ দফা      | ...     | /০    |
| ছিকর   | ১ দফা      | ...     | ২২    |
| লঙ্গ (Cloves)  | ৥ তোলা     | ...     | ১০    |
| সাদাকাগজ (White paper)   | ১৥০ দিস্তা | ...     | ১০    |
| শুপারি (Betel-nut)   | ১০ সের     | ...     | ৫১৮/০ |
| মৎস্য (Fish)   | ১টা        | ...     | ২/০   |

| আসামী                                    | জিনিস               | রোপৈয়া | কোড়ি  |
|--|---------------------|---------|--------|
| মটুকের রংচা (Tin for the tiara or crest) | ১ দফা               | ...     | ১/০    |
| "  | "                   | ...     | ১৭/০   |
| নাও কেরেয়া (Boat-hire)                  | "                   | ...     | "      |
| আয়না মাল (Glass)                        | "                   | ...     | ১০     |
| কেবলা পাটুনি                             | "                   | ...     | ১১/    |
| ছয়ারিয়া পাটুনি                         | "                   | ...     | ৬/০    |
| গুনি ১জোড়                               | "                   | ...     | ১০     |
|  |                     |         | ২২/০   |
|  | সাবেক পাওনা ইত্যাদি |         | ১১১/৫  |
|  | বাদ কৈফিয়ত ফেরত    |         | ১১/০   |
|  |                     | মোট     | ২৪১৭/৫ |

| কাপড়  | রোপৈয়া | কোড়ি |
|--|---------|-------|
| (অস্পর্শ) ৩খান   | ...     | ১৬১/০ |
| পাচ হাতি ১খান (cloth)  | ...     | ১০    |
| গামছা (towel) ১খান   | ...     | /৫    |
| গজি (cloth) ১খান   | ...     | ১১/১০ |
| এক পাট্টা ১খান (cloth)   | ...     | ১১/১০ |
| পগোড়ি পটকা ৪গাছ (A narrow strip of cloth for the turban) <sup>1</sup> |         | ১১০   |

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 ৪১৫

At this period the whole amount represented only Rs. 12 in our present currency. Some items such as rice, oil and others are omitted in the list. Even including them the whole amount could not exceed Rs. 20.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *ময়মনসিংহের বিবরণ* by Kedarnath Majumdar.

<sup>2</sup> The present value of these would be something like Rs. 50.

It is only the other day, *i.e.*, in 1838 A. D., that Mr. Taylor in his *Topography of Dacca*, furnished two lists of expenditure during the funeral ceremonies of the Hindus and the Mahomedans. It appears from his calculations that the Hindus of indigent circumstances in his day, spent about Rs. 7 for the purpose. The Mahomedans also spent about the same amount. In the Śrādh ceremony such Hindus spent about the same amount while the Mahomedans in their fourth fatohā spent not more than Rs. 5. According to Mr. Taylor the Hindus and Mahomedans of limited means spent about Rs. 10 each, in their marriage ceremony. This writer calculated that at this time one ordinary meal in a hotel of Dacca would cost only two pice.<sup>1</sup> Such was the economic condition of Bengal only 90 years before, not to speak of earlier periods.

This cheapness might be due to the fact that the currency was less in circulation than it is now. This might also be due to the fact that the people led on the whole simple lives and kept less touch with the foreigners and the whirlpool of the world-trade than we find in existence now. Even when the Bengalis carried on foreign trade in her palmy days they did it to their own advantage, thus avoiding loss in the bargain. Whatever might have been the cause of cheapness, it is sure the articles of general consumption were plentiful and necessarily very cheap.

The people in general depended mostly on agriculture and thus if the produce was good, people lived contented and happily and if it was bad their miseries were indescribable. The caprices of the rulers sometimes ruined the people altogether. No doubt when the ruler was good everything went on smoothly as the following illustration

<sup>1</sup> See Taylor's *Topography of Dacca*.

See also the *Dacca Gazetteer*, and ঢাকার বিবরণ, pp. 159-167.

from Kavikankan's Chandikāvya will prove. The work will further describe the probable miseries of the people, their relief at the hands of a good ruler, the system of land-tenure, and the mutual rights and duties of a landlord and his tenants in the 15th century.

The king Kāketu of the Chandikāvya poem addressed the following to one Bulān Mandal. It was just what a paternal despot would do :—

“ O, brother Bulān Mandal, do reside in my city and I shall present you with pieces of kundals (earrings) as a mark of favour. In agriculture seek your convenience first, and if it be hard for you to pay my rent yearly, do so after three years. I do allot one tankā (rupee) per plough and have my signature affixed in your document containing the lease. I won't seize your produce from the field, but shall wait till you pay me off in cowries at your convenience and shall not depute any tax-collector to realise taxes from you. If you really mean to remain in Gujrat, I won't demand anything in the shape of 'Selāmis,' 'Bānsgāris,' 'Pārvanis' and 'Panchaks,' and I won't also charge boat-tax,

১    শুন ভাই বুলান মণ্ডল ।  
 আইস আমার পুর,            সস্তাপ করিব দূর  
           কাণে দিব সোণার কুণ্ডল ॥  
 আমার নগরে বৈস,            যত ইচ্ছা চাষ চষ,  
           তিন সন বহি দিহ কর  
 হাল পিছে এক তুকা,            কারে না করিহ শকা,  
           পাট্টায় নিশান মোর ধর ॥  
 খন্দে নাহি নিব বাড়ি,            রহে বসে দিও কড়ি,  
           ডিহীদার নাহি দিব দেশে ।  
 সেলামী বাঁশগাড়ী,            নানা বাজে বত কড়ি,  
           না লইব গুজরাট বাসে ॥

salt-tax, loom-tax, and paddy-cutting tax or demand anything on the plea of mistakes in the account-books. However much you may sell your good paddy, I won't covet its share, nor shall I desire any increase of blind population in my city. I won't take any house-rent from those of you who are new settlers in my city, rather I shall help those amongst you who will pursue agriculture, with paddy, for sowing purposes. I shall verily be a servant of the Brāhmins, fulfil everybody's want and duly honour the honourable.'

The above supplies a few names for exorbitant and illegal taxes that were taken by oppressive rulers and landlords. Many of these exist even now. 'Selāmi' is a kind of fee taken on all cases of interview with the landlords and is also taken on all cases of land-settlement. *Bānsgāris* are formal possessions of land by publicly thrusting a piece of bamboo into the required spot. *Pārvanis* are dues taken by the landlord upon the rents of the tenants on occasions of religious ceremonies. Now-a-days, the officers of a landlord receive an amount before the pujās which also goes by the same name. *Panchaks* are perhaps one-fifth of the produce of a tenant taken by the landlord.

পার্কনী পঞ্চক যত,      গুরা লোন সানা ভাত

ধান কাটি কলম কহুরে ।

যত বেচ ভাল ধান,      তার না লইব দান,

অন্ধ নাহি বাড়াইব পুরে ॥

যত প্রজা বৈসে ঘর,      তার না লইব কর,

চাষি জনে বাড়ি দিব ধান ।

হইয়া ব্রাহ্মণের দাস,      পুরাষ সভার আশ,

জনে জনে সাধিব সম্মান ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য, পৃ: ৮৪ ।

These dues were taken during the Islamic rule and some exist even now. These might as well be supposed to exist more or less under different names during the pre-Mahomedan period, as at that time, too, the despots existed.





## CHAPTER XVI

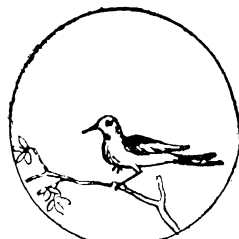
### BIRDS



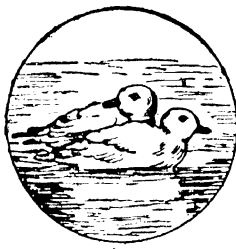
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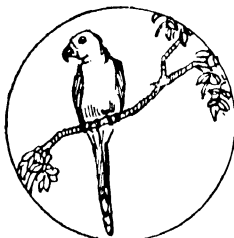
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12

1. Machraṅgā

2. Pechaka

3. Khañjana

4. Chakrabāka

5. Baka

6. Balākā

7. Kaṅka

8. Tiya

9. Śakuni

10. Bhuchaṅgā

11. Kokila


12. Pāpiyā.

## CHAPTER XVI

### BIRDS.

The tropical land of Bengal abounds with birds in its innumerable jungles and villages ; they delight the fancy of the people and often serve some practical ends, for which the hunters were once ever busy to secure them. Our old literature is full of accounts of many interesting species of birds.<sup>1</sup>

A. *The following list of a few of the principal birds will give some idea of them :—*

(1)  <sup>2</sup> = Parrot (Psittacidæ group) —

This bird is very common in Bengal. The names given to this species in the province are two-fold—Tiyā and Totā. They may be classified into two divisions, *e.g.*, *Palæornis cyanocephalus* (Lalsirā Totā) and *Palæornis torquatus* (Totā). These birds are in the habit of laying their eggs in the holes of trees, in the niches or corners of buildings. They live in flocks and do make great damage to crops.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For an elaborate list of the Bengal birds, see among others,—Kavikaṅkaṇ Chaṇḍī, the Dharmamaṅgal poems, the Rāmāyaṇa, ' Govinda-Chandrer Gīta ' the East Bengal Ballads and the Vaiṣṇava Pada Literature.

<sup>2</sup> For Parrots see Māṇik Chandra Rājār Gān. See also Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām's Chaṇḍī-Kāvya, p. 63, Baṅgabāsi edition. See also the Dharmamaṅgal poems by Rūparām.

<sup>3</sup> This bird, according to the celebrated ornithologist Frank Finn, "is often extremely destructive to grain and fruit crops." In spite of its destructive propensity it is a beloved bird of man. Not only in Bengal but in various other countries it is highly prized. See also " Birds of an Indian Village " by Douglas Dewar, pp. 51-52.

That this bird caught the fancy of the Bengali people is illustrated by the fact that they used to build the picturesque prow of their ships after this bird. These ships were called the “Sukapañkhi.”<sup>1</sup> Our folk-literature is replete with stories of the birds Śuka and Sāri.<sup>2</sup> Convention favours the introduction of this bird in the classic poem, as typifying wisdom or prophetic power. Even as late as the middle part of the Eighteenth century we find that Prince Sundara of the Vidyā-Sundara story (as described by Bhāratachandra among others) carried with him a Śuka bird in a cage, when he visited Burdwan on the plea of joining a *tol* there. We often find in old paintings a young dilettante of fashion carrying in his hands this bird, which sits quiet without chain, having become a pet of its protege. The Vaiṣṇavas are great lovers of this bird as they make it utter the name of “Kriṣṇa.” There are poems in which Śuka and Sāri are represented as taking sides with Kriṣṇa and Rādhā respectively in their love-quarrel. Our old literature, such as the Chaṇḍi-Kāvya, the Dharmamañgal poems and the East Bengal Ballads are full of references of this bird.

(2) সারি<sup>3</sup> (Mynah) :—

Along with Śuka the bird Sāri must be mentioned. Probably the word “Sālika,” a common kind of Sāri bird

<sup>1</sup> See the Sanskrit work Juktikalpataru by King Bhoja.

<sup>2</sup> উপরে বসিল সারি শুক নীচ নিল।

—কাঞ্চনমালা (ঠাকুরদাদার ঝুলি, শিবমজুমদার)

(The bird Sāri took her seat above while the bird Śuka sat below.)—Thākurdādār Jhuli (Kāñchanmālā) by D. Majumdar.

See also for the bird Śuka, Pākhir Kathā (in Bengali), by S. Law, pp. 3-7, 36, 53 and 191.

<sup>3</sup> See Mānik Chandra Rājār Gān :—

সারি শুয়া গেল উড়াও দিয়া।

(Both Sāri and Śuka flew away.)

of Bengal, is derived from the word “Sārikā.” Among the various kinds of the bird Sāri, two attract our notice. One is called the wild Mynah (Parbatiyā Mynah) and the other Sālīka. The former belongs to the family of Eulabes (and so is not Mynah proper). In England it is known as the Grackle, while the latter (*e. g.*, Sālīka or *Tardus Sālīka* or *Acridotheres tristis*) belongs to the family of the Sturnidæ. Though both the birds can well imitate human voice, it is the former (*e.g.*, the Grackle or *Gracula religiosa*) which can conspicuously do so. People tame both kinds of birds for the purpose of training them to imitate human voice. The poetic tradition which makes the bird “Sāri” wife of “Śuka,” is not founded on facts. They are birds of different species. The Grackle has got the colour of blackish-grey while some species of the bird Sālīka or the common Mynah are white.

The Mynah builds its nest in the holes of trees with the help of grass, twigs, straw, rags and feathers. It also occupies a nest once occupied by a wood-pecker. It also sometimes builds its nest on houses, walls or even wells. The nest is very untidy to look at. In such a nest the Mynah lays its eggs (four or five blue eggs) during the rains. The rosy or the common sterling does not build its nest in this land as it does not breed here. It breeds in a far-off country in Asia-Minor and from its native place makes a long trip to Bengal during the harvest season. It does much damage to crops but does some good also by eating locusts and grass-hoppers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See for details “Birds of an Indian Village,” by D. Dewar, pp. 34-39.

The Sāri was once a favourite bird to the ladies. See *শ্রীমদ্ভাগবত, চতুর্থ স্কন্ধ*.

About the auspicious nature of the bird, see the Mahābhārata, Anuśāsan Parva, 104th Canto, 114th śloka.

(3) পারাবত and ঘুঘু<sup>1</sup> (Pigeons and Doves) :—

(a) পারাবত, পায়রা or কবুতর (Pigeon).

(b) ঘুঘু (Dove).

(কপোত may signify both the classes.)

Pigeons and doves both belong to the family of Columbinæ. So in dealing with the pigeons we cannot avoid the doves. The pigeons or kabutars are of two general types—

(i) *Columbia livia* (pigeons).

(ii) *Crocopus phoenicopterus* (the pigeon or Hari-al.)

(a) The pigeons (kabutar) are nothing but large doves :—

The pigeons (kabutar) are known to the English as the Indian bluerock-pigeon. A type of pigeon with which people are not very familiar is called Hari-al (*Crocopus phoenicopterus*). The pigeons are very akin to the doves in their ways of life. The general colour of the plumage of the bluerock or common pigeon is greyish blue. Its neck has got various forms of green or red.

From very early times, the people of this country favour the pigeons<sup>2</sup> and our literature is full of their accounts. Even to-day pigeon is a very favourite bird believed to bring good luck to a family. When it builds its nest on the ceiling of a house, it is considered as a piece of good luck by the owner of it. Many people make pigeon-holes while building their houses and in these they are allowed to breed.

<sup>1</sup> That কপোত may signify other birds than পারাবত will be seen from the following line:—‘পারাবত কপোত লিখিল পাখচিল’ (The birds পারাবত, কপোত and পাখচিল, a kind of kite, were painted)—Kavikāṇṇa’s Chaṇḍī-Kāvya (Baṅgabāsi ed.), p. 63. See for the reference of ঘুঘু or dove in ধর্মরাজের গীত by Rūparām.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed description of the pigeons see “Birds of an Indian Village” by D. Dewar, pp. 79-80.

A kind of pigeon which builds their nesting place on the roofs of a house is called "Jālāli-kabutar." <sup>1</sup> A variety of rock-pigeons (commonly known as গোলা পায়রা) is called গিরিবাজ (Giribāj). This kind of pigeon is reared for their excellent acrobatic performances in the air. Dacca was a great centre of such birds. Another variety with such a quality is known as Lotan (লোটন পায়রা). These birds will rise high up in the air and then make circular movements with head downwards and will show various other feats raising the admiration of the people.<sup>2</sup>

The pigeons have always been favoured by monarchs of all ages. We know from 'Ain-i-Akbari' that the Emperor

<sup>1</sup> There is a tradition that it got its name from the saint Jālāluddīn who is said to have first imported it to this country. This Jālāluddīn fought against the ill-fated Rājā Ballāl II of Rānpāl (Bikrampur).

<sup>2</sup> See Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām's Chaṇḍī-Kāvya (pp. 115-116, Baṅgabāsi ed.). We find in this work that the owners of the pigeons would give names to their birds. Rather a long and interesting list of such names will be found in Kavikaṅkaṇ's Chaṇḍī-Kāvya. As for the game with these pigeons detailed description will be found in this work in the pages mentioned above. Thus,

লয়ে নিজ পারাবত,                      চলে ধনপতি দত্ত,  
লড়াইতে নগরিয়া সাথে ।

করি শুভক্ষণ বেলা,                      চড়িয়া পাটের দোলা,  
কিঙ্করে পিঞ্জর লৈল সাথে ॥

খাতিয়ারি সাত-শালিকা              খেত নেতা নয়ান সুখা  
করট ভাষট স্থলক্ষণ ।

সৌজমুখ রজ-গোলা,                      শিখরিয়া ঘনলোলা,  
সাঙলী সুবলী সুদর্শন ॥

পারুল্যা বাতাসা হাসা,                      নাড়া খাড়া বুড়ী ডাসা,  
জটা সিদ্ধুরিয়া বনজয়া ।

নীল কুমুদকুখা                      থিরিণি দীঘল-মুখা,  
মন-সুখা রান্না দেউলিয়া ॥

Akbar (16th century) collected more than 20,000 pigeons in his aviary which was then very well-known. Akbar's efforts brought into existence the classes of pigeons known as Lakkā, Lotan, Parpā and others. The Lakkā pigeons are known for their proud gait of the head when moving. Its note also is very pleasing.

The Lotan pigeons are of two kinds, and as mentioned before, are noted for their acrobatic performances on the ground and in the sky. These are all thrown down on the ground and the trained ones spring up with head downwards and body upwards in a curious manner. Pigeons are trained to serve man as couriers. It is well known to serve man in this capacity very faithfully.<sup>1</sup>

(b) ঘুষু<sup>2</sup> (Doves) :—

The doves like the pigeons are very common birds of Bengal and feed on grain. Though it is called 'Ghughu'

সিংহ বাবা রণজিতা                      কয়রা কপাল চিতা,

সিদ্ধ মাটা পাঙুশা পাখরা ।

মাণিক দোসলি মুড়া,                      আভাঙ্গ পরসা ছড়া,

পালট বিলাটি বহিভোরা ॥

পাঙুসী পাখরি টাঙ্গি,                      হাঁসী ভাসী বুড়ি রাঙ্গী,

নানারঙ্গে লইল পায়রী ।

—কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী (বঙ্গবাসী), পৃঃ ১১৫ ।

<sup>1</sup> See Encyclo. Brit., Vol. XXXI (10th ed.), p. 770, about carrier pigeons. See also Kaṭilya's Arthaśāstra. See also *Lectures pour Tour* by Armand Rio. It is peculiar that a kind of beautiful pigeons which is native to New Guinea bears the name of, 'Goura.' Cf. The ancient name of Bengal.

See also the Eastern Bengal Ballads, Part III, Bheloā, p. 68, in which a pigeon has been described as reciting the 'Bayets' of the Korān.

<sup>2</sup> See Dharmarājer Git by Rūparām :—

‘কোকিল খঞ্জন ঘুষু চিল কাক পাখী ।’

(The birds Koel, wagtail, dove, kite and crow.)

in Bengal, it is known variously as 'Fakhta' 'Gugu,' and 'Perki' in the up-country. There are many kinds of doves of which some are spotted, some brown and some red. The size of the dove is like that of the Mynah. Usually there is very little difference in appearance between the cock-bird and the hen. The dove is not very expert in making nests. It builds its nest on scanty materials and twigs which are very few in number. This bird brings up broods many times a year. • Usually it lays two eggs which are white. Doves not only build their nests on trees but also in buildings if there is any suitable place for them. They once served as couriers <sup>1</sup> like the pigeons which are famous in this respect.

(4) The birds of prey (Accipitres family) :—

The birds belonging to the family of "Accipitres" are generally known as the birds of prey. This group is also capable of subdivision into at least three branches, *e.g.*, 'Vulturidæ,' "Falconidæ," and "Pandionidæ." In the medical works of Charaka and Suśruta, we find these birds of prey are classed as প্রসহ (*i.e.*, birds which take

<sup>1</sup> See ঘৃচ্চরিত by Bhabānanda Sen, C. U. MS. No. 1021, Fol. 2 :—

এত বাক্য রাধা কয়,                      ঘুঘু পক্ষি সবিস্ময়,

চলে পক্ষ শ্রীহরি বলিয়া ।

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

বায়ুপথে চলে পক্ষি পবনে ভর দিয়া ।

হেনকালে সন্ধান আইল একজন ।

তাড়াতাড়ি করে পক্ষি উপরে গমন ॥

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

গগনেতে ঈগল সন্ধানে যুদ্ধ হয় ।

অরিপক্ষ তার কাছে মানে পরাজয় ।

কৃষ্ণপক্ষ ঘুঘু লয়া করিল বিজয় ॥                      ইত্যাদি ।



their food with the help of their beaks and by a sudden descent on the prey) and further subdivided it into “গৃধ্ৰ” (Vulturidæ), শেঁচন (Falconidæ) and “কুরুর” (Pandionidæ), curiously befitting the western subdivision of later times as mentioned above.

(a) গৃধ্ৰ or শকুনি (Vulturidæ) :—

Although শকুনি, শকুন, or শকুন্ত sometimes means in Sanskrit literature any bird, still in a more limited sense শকুনি signifies birds of the গৃধ্ৰ (Vulturidæ) family. The head of this bird is more or less bare or only clothed with short stubby down.<sup>1</sup>

There are various kinds of vultures. One is called গৃধিনী or রাজগীধ (*Otogyph calvus*). Another kind of vulture is known as শকুনি (*Pseudogyps Bengalensis*).<sup>2</sup> This bird differs from the above bird in the absence of the red wattles. The colour of its head and neck is blackish grey but the back is white. Another kind of vulture is smaller than those two in size, shape and colour. “Its bare head, neck and bill are yellow, the plumage is dirty white with some black on the wing. Young birds are black; when they are about a year old, they lose their black feathers and get white ones instead.”<sup>3</sup> This is also called শকুনি in Bengal and সফেদগীধ (*Neophron ginginianus*) in the up-country. Vultures used to nest in cold weather, which is not the practice with many birds in this country. But they may build roosting places on high trees even in the rainy season.

<sup>1</sup> See Blandford's Fauna of British India, Birds, Vol. III.

<sup>2</sup> There is a belief current in Bengal that a শকুনি will never touch a carcass first but will invariably wait for a গৃধিনী for the purpose.

<sup>3</sup> See “Birds of an Indian Village” by D. Dewar, pp. 71-72.

## (b) ফলন (Falconidæ) :—

Among many kinds of birds belonging to the group of Falconidæ we notice the following :—

(i) চিল<sup>1</sup> (Kite, *Milvus govinda*) :—

The kite has got a beak which resembles that of the eagle. It is a bird of prey and as such its beak is made in a way befitting its mode of life, *i.e.*, seizing and tearing its prey by swooping down upon it. The kite feeds on flesh. But it is also known to catch fish for its livelihood. Just at the end of the rainy season in Bengal the kites hover in the sky and give out a shrill sound which is taken by the people as indicative of good number of fish to be available, and their expectations seldom fail in this respect. The bird is larger in size than the crow and is in the habit of pouncing upon its prey which it catches with the help of its big talons. The kites make nests in February or somewhat earlier and breed in the same month. The bird lays two eggs at a time. A kind of kite is known as শঙ্কর চিল or গরুড়(?)<sup>2</sup> in Bengal which is also known as “ভ্রাক্ষণি চিল,” “ধোবিল্লা চিল” or “রুহমুবারক” in the up-country. It is a very fine bird to look at. It is white in its head and shoulders and brown in its wings. Probably this kind of kite is known as “গরুড়” in South India, evidently because its colour resembles that of the fabulous bird of Hindu mythology. It is in the habit

<sup>1</sup> See Dharmarājer Gīt by Rūparām. For শঙ্কর চিল see Govindachandrer Gīt. It is otherwise known as শঙ্ক চিল as we find in this work. According to popular belief শঙ্ক চিল is auspicious to look at during the commencement of a journey while the contrary is apprehended as regards another kind of kite called ডোমচিল। See বৃহদ্রত্নপুরাণ, উত্তর খণ্ড, ৬৪৭। For ডোমচিল see Kavikaṇṭha's-Chaṇḍī Kāvya, p. 114 (C. U. edition).

<sup>2</sup> বামদিকে লিখিল গরুড় মহাবীর।

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য, পৃ: ৬৩ (বঙ্গবাসী)।

(Towards the left was painted the hero Garuḍa.)

of living by the side of water as it lives on fish. Both the ordinary and the Śaṅkara kite build rather ugly-looking nests high up on trees—the latter preferably by the side of some water-courses. The kite has got the mischievous habit of swooping down upon any basket of eatables. It is a strong bird and can rise very high in the air.

(ii) শিক্ৰা or বাজ (Śikrā, Hawk or *Astur badius*) :—

The hawks (a variety of which is known as Buzzards) are allied to the falcons and both are known by the common term of বাজ, শিক্ৰা or শয়চান<sup>1</sup> in Bengal. There are many varieties of this bird.

The Śikrā feeds on small birds. It also lives on lizards, rats and grasshoppers. The hawk has got a very harsh sound. Its nesting time is from April to June and it is usually in the habit of laying four eggs at a time. These eggs are white in colour with patches of reddish brown. The Śikrā is not a migratory bird and is trained to catch quails and partridges. This bird is so brave that it will attack another much bigger than it. It is smaller in size than the crow.

(iii) ওয়াক্ or ওয়খব<sup>2</sup> (Twany Eagle, *Aquila Vindhiana*) :—

A kind of bird of prey is called ওয়াক্ or ওয়খব (Wokhab, the tawny eagle). It has got feathery legs and resemble a kite in appearance. It lays two eggs of white colour with spots of dull brown. It sometimes swoops down upon

Though the poet here probably means the mythological hero, still it may be presumed that a kind of kite was known as such. In Southern India by Garuḍa is still meant a kind of kite.

(See D. Dewar's "Birds of an Indian Village.")

<sup>1</sup> See ঘৃষ্ণচরিত্র by Bhabānanda Sen, C. U. MS. 1021, Fol. 2. See also the Dharmamaṅgal poems by Ghanarām,—“যার সত্য বুঝিতে শয়চান হ'ল ধর্ম” (To learn whose truth the god Dharmā took the appearance of a Sayachān).

<sup>2</sup> See ঘৃষ্ণচরিত্র by Bhabānanda Sen, C. U. MS. No. 1021, Fol. 2.

the ducks when they swim in a pond and takes one of them away in talons. It has got a very harsh and shrill note and is unpopular with all small birds which sometimes attack it in combination.

Hawking or falconry was a favourite pastime in bygone days. The hawks were admirably trained by their owners to catch other birds and it was considered a great amusement in the past. Emperor Akbar (16th century) was much interested in these birds as he was with all birds and laid down strict rules about the quantity of food which each kind of falcon under his care was to receive. Besides he fixed the prices of the falcons and hawks. It is well known that some of these birds of prey are migratory while some remain in the country all the year round. It is also an interesting fact that the female of these birds are bigger in size and stronger physically than their males. To a falconer, therefore, the female bird of prey is of worth more than the male one.

In the শৈনিক শাস্ত্র (a treatise on falconry brought to light by MM. H. P. Sastri) supposed to be written by Rudrachandra Deva (who flourished sometime between the 13th-16th century), a Raja of Kurmāchala or Kumaun, may be found a very valuable and elaborate description regarding the maintenance of the শেন birds or the hawks. This work contains, among others, various instructions about the aviary, food and health of these birds.<sup>1</sup>

(c) কুরর, কোড়া or কুরা (Pandionidæ, a kind of osprey): —

The bird Koḍā or osprey, as stated before, belongs to the group of Pandionidæ. This bird was once a great

<sup>1</sup> "বাজাদি কলবিদ্ধাদেৰ্গাসংনাতিচিরস্থিতম্ ।

লঘুকৃত্যং প্রদাতব্যং যথা পরিণামে ভুখা ॥

favourite of the Bengalis as the references in the Mymensingh Ballads will go to show.

How this bird, when it rained, catch other birds of the same species, is an amusing fact and has been referred to elsewhere. This bird frequent the marshes of Bengal and catches fish. It has got a very shrill note and is not more big than the kite in size. The proper season to go in quest of Kurās is the rainy season.<sup>1</sup> The ospreys differ from the falcons in the wings and the talons. The ospreys have got a very sharp sight which help them in catching fish from the pools and marshes. A kind of eagle known as the fishing eagle is also classed with the osprey as its talons and habits resemble those of the osprey. This eagle (Polioætus) unlike other eagles (Haliaëtus) take fish as its staple food. Thus it sometimes happens that when the common osprey catches fish from a river and rises up to the sky the fishing eagle or the fish-hawk (which is also a kind of osprey) robs it of its prize.

পুষ্ট্যে প্রবর্দ্ধয়েদেবাং মাত্রামথ শনৈঃ শনৈঃ ।

স্নানার্থং বারিপূর্ণাশ্চ স্থাপয়েৎ কুণ্ডিকাঃ পুরঃ ॥”

—শৈনিক শাস্ত্র, ৫ম পরিচ্ছেদ, ২৪-২৬ শ্লোক ।

(The meat intended for the birds of prey should not be unduly stale. This should be light, delicious and wholesome. The quantity of food should be gradually increased for their nutrition. For their bath basin-full of water should be kept near them.)

<sup>1</sup> ভাইয়ের কাছে পত্র লেখে সন্ধান করিয়া ।

যত্ন করি পালা কোড়া দিল উড়াইয়া ॥

পঞ্চভাইয়ে পত্র পাইয়া পান্সী নাও করে ।

ছল করিয়া তারা কোড়া শিকার ধরে ॥

বিস্তার ধলাই বিল পদ্মসুলে ভরা ।

কোড়া শিকার করিতে দেওয়ান যায় হুপুরবেলা ॥

—মদ্রা, p. 86; Mymensingh Ballads (Bengali version), Part I.

[The girl Maluā being kept by the Dewan under his clutches without her consent, contrived to send a Koḍā with a letter to her brothers, for her rescue. Her five

(5) হংস<sup>1</sup> (Goose and Duck) :—

Among the two chief species of the bird হংস as found in Bengal, the bigger one is known as the রাজহাঁস (the grey goose) and the smaller one as the পাতিহাঁস (the duck). These birds, specially the smaller ones, are kept in large numbers by people of the countryside for their eggs. They are in the habit of sporting in water.<sup>2</sup> The popular tradition about these birds is that they can separate milk

brothers received the note and came to the Dhalāi marsh really to meet their sister Maluā, but apparently to catch the Koḍā birds. As expected, the Dewan also came to the very marsh (which was both big and full of lotuses) for the same purpose of hunting the Koḍā birds at noon.]

The above shows that the bird Koḍā was also employed as the courier-bird to carry letters just like the pigeons. The Dewan's visit of the Dhalāi marsh in quest of Koḍās is a proof that even the rich partook in the pastime of hunting Koḍās for the sake of pleasure.

<sup>1</sup> আইল আষাঢ় মাস জলের বাড়ি ফেনা ।

কুড়ার ডাকেতে শুনে বর্ষার নমুনা ॥

—মল্লী, পৃ: ৪৬, ময়মনসিংহ গীতিকা, ১ম ভাগ ।

(The month of Aṣāḍha, i.e., June-July came and with it the water began to increase. The Koḍā birds began to utter their cry at this time, thus showing that the rains have set in.)

—Maluā, p. 46.

<sup>1</sup> See a Pada by Govinda Dās, Padakalpataru, p. 769.

<sup>2</sup> See also—

নিখিল সুভাসিত যমুনার জল ।

রাজহংস কেলি করে পদ্ম উৎপল ॥

—কৃত্তিবাসী রামায়ণ ।

(In the clear and sparkling water of the Jamunā, the geese were merrily sporting with the lotuses.)

—The Rāmāyaṇa by Kṛttivāsa, C. U. MS. No. 43, Fol. 6.

See also—

রাজহংস রাজহংসী ক্রীড়া করে জলে ।

—কৃত্তিবাসী রামায়ণ, অরণ্যকাণ্ড ।

(The male and female geese were sporting in water.)

from water when both remain mixed up.<sup>1</sup> The bird রাজহংস is migratory<sup>2</sup> in nature and the poetic tradition (which is also corroborated by facts) ascribes their journey to the lake Mānasa during the rains—"বর্ষাস্থ মানসং যান্তি হংসাঃ."

(6) জলপিপি<sup>3</sup> (*Metopidius Indicus*) :—

Along with the birds mentioned above, another kind may here be noticed which is known in Bengal as জলপিপি (*Metopidius Indicus*). In Sanskrit literature the bird is known as the কারণ্ডব. In outward appearance জলপিপি resembles সারস (Sāras) and to some extent পানকোড়ি (*Phalacrocorax Javanicus*). The bird জলপিপি has got the head of a crow, long legs, and black colour. It visits the marshes which abounds with the floating lotus-leaves on which it walks. It moves with great rapidity and lightness of foot over the lotus-leaves and is semi-aquatic in character.

(7) পানকোড়ি<sup>4</sup> (*Phalacrocorax Javanicus*) :—

According to some this bird was known to the poets of Sanskrit literature as the কারণ্ডব. Its colour is black but its head does not resemble that of the crow, neither

- <sup>1</sup> নীর ক্ষীর হংসন পান বিধায়ন,  
কোন পৃথক করি পায়ত ।

—মাধো, পদ্মকল্পতরু, পৃ: ৬৯৪ ।

(Who can distinguish the milk from water like the ducks, when engaged in drinking?)

<sup>2</sup> The migratory nature of these birds makes them suitable messengers for love-errands, by our poets. See হংসদূত, by নরসিংহ দাস, C. U. MS. No. 989, Fol. 17. Cf. The Sanskrit story of Nala-Damayanti.

- <sup>3</sup> বাউই পাউই শিখি পক্ষী হরিভাল ।

—কুন্তিবাসী রামায়ণ, উত্তরাকাণ্ড ।

See পাখীর কথা, by S. Law.

<sup>4</sup> See Govindachander Gīt for পানকোড়ি which is otherwise known as পাদিলিয়া in Orissa side.

its legs are long, which are attributed to কার্ণাট. A kind of পানকৌড়ি is known as বনমুরগী, বন্যকুকুট or ভাস (the water-hen or *Anaeronis phœnicurus*). It is also known as the Kināti in the up-country. It is a very shy bird and always tries to avoid human observation. It is usually a very quiet bird but very noisy during the monsoon. It loves to swim in water. Its nest is a clumsy structure usually made in a bamboo-grove, thick bush or a palm tree.

8. (a) সারস<sup>1</sup> (Sāras—a kind of crane) :—

The Sāras is a kind of crane which is allied to the heron and the stork. This bird has got a long beak and loud note.<sup>2</sup> It is very fond of living by the side of water. The bird is known for its intense love for its companion when in pair. It pairs for life and it is said that when one of a pair dies, the other bird does not long survive the shock. The Sāras though living separately in pairs, sometimes also congregate in large numbers and usually frequent the marshy grounds or swamps or large lakes. The bird has got a very loud note which resembles the sound of a trumpet. It usually lays two eggs (one male and the other female) during the months of July, August and September. When hatched the two birds live together till death.

<sup>1</sup> (a) See গুণিনী ও পেচকের কলহ, উত্তরাকাণ্ড, কৃত্তিবাসী রামায়ণ।

(b) সরোবরে সরসিজগল দিল দেখা।

হংস সারস পড়ে মেলি ছই পাখা ॥

—যহনন্দন দাসের পদ, পদকল্পতরু, পৃঃ ৪২৫।

(There were lotuses in the lake and in it the swans and the cranes fell with outstretched wings.)

(c) See also a pada by গোবিন্দদাস, পদকল্পতরু, পৃঃ ১৬৯.

<sup>2</sup> The loud note of সারস is its characteristic feature as the expression খএর খুরজ লেখা সারস সরব does signify (খর্খরাঝের গীত by রূপরায়).



(b) বক (Heron—*Ardea Nivea*):—<sup>1</sup>

The heron (বক) is usually known as the crane, though the cranes belong to a different family. There are various kinds of herons (বক) some of which are noticed below. These are বলাকা (small crane, বৃহৎ শুভ্র বক large egret) ক্রৌঞ্চ (pond-heron or *Ardeola grayi*), and কঙ্ক (*Ardea manillensis*).

The long neck of the heron is “s”-like in curvature. The sound of বলাকা is very harsh. Usually its shrill note is heard when it is flying in the sky. But its note is also heard from marshes in the morning and evening. For its very note it has got the name of “কঙ্ক” (literally ‘making sound in water’). The bird বলাকা pairs during the rainy season.

(c) কঙ্ক (*Ardea manillensis*):—

The bird কঙ্ক possesses ash colour with redish tint on its back, wings and tail.<sup>2</sup> In ancient times the feathers of this bird were used for decorative purposes, especially for

<sup>1</sup> See Kavikāṅkaṇ-Ḥaṇḍī (Baṅgabāsi edition), p. 63—

শুণ্ডর ভারই গোদাভাজ লিখে বক ।

See also, ধর্মরাজের গীত by রূপরাম—

কুইরি কচল বক লিখ্যা বুড়ি পাঁচ ।

See also কৃত্তিবাসী রামায়ণ, উত্তরাকাণ্ড—

বকাবকী বাহুড় বাহুড়ী হুড়ি টিয়া ।

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ডল্লনমিশ্র (the annotator of the Sanskrit work on Surgery called হস্ত-সংহিতা by হস্তত)—“লৌহপুষ্ঠো দীর্ঘপাদঃ পক্ষাঃ পাণ্ডুবর্ণভাবঃ ।”

See the line in গৃধ্রীণ্ড পোচকের কলহ, উত্তরাকাণ্ড, কৃত্তিবাসী রামায়ণ,—“খঞ্জন খঞ্জনী ফিঙ্গে খোকড়িয়া কঙ্কঃ ।”

The bird sometimes feeds on serpents as the following expression will show :—

“ভুজঙ্গে গিলিয়া লেয় খোকড়িয়া কঙ্ক ।”

—কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী, বদ্বাসী, পৃঃ ৬৩ ।

(The powerful bird কঙ্ক eats serpents.)

decorating the arrows. Now-a-days the feathers of a heron are worn on the headdress of the rich people all over the world. The word **কঙ্ক** in the sense of **বক** is even to be found in the Vedic literature.

(d) **ক্ৰৌঞ্চ** (Pond-heron or *Ardeola grayi*) :—

This bird is known in Bengal as **কৌচবক**, though some Sanskrit annotators such as **ডল্লনাচার্য্য** thinks **কৌচবক** is the female **ক্ৰৌঞ্চ**. The pond-herons are also known as the squacco-herons and are smaller in size than the true herons and egrets. They remain concealed in the paddy-fields and by the side of the marshes owing to their small size which is like that of an ordinary fowl. Usually they are unsociable but are gregarious during the rainy season which is their breeding season. The plumage of the bird is mud-coloured and its feathers are white. The feathers of the back become reddish during the breeding season. The colour of the bird somewhat resembles that of water, which helps it to catch frogs and fish unnoticed. The bird has got a very keen eyesight. During daytime these birds keep themselves apart, but at night a number of them roost on a tree. The resting season is from the month of April to May. The sound of pond-herons is harsh and resembles the croak of a frog. A kind of pond-heron is known as the curlew. The curlews are winter visitors to India and utter a very plaintive cry. They <sup>1</sup> move in flocks and leave India at the end of the winter.

Another kind of heron is known as the egret. The egrets are of many kinds such as **Gāi Bagla**, **Bara Bagla**,

<sup>1</sup> **হংসবক** শ্রেণী **পদ্মাজল** হৃদয়ধারা ।

—**ত্ৰীশীপদকল্পতরু**, পৃ: ৭৩২ ।

(The orderly lines of the white birds such as the swans and the curlews in their flight resemble the milky flow of the Ganges water.)

Karchia Bagla, etc. The egrets are a little larger than the paddy bird. The colour of Gāi Bagla (গো-বক) or the cattle-egrets is white, bill yellow and legs black. During breeding season it changes its feathers and the new feathers do then resemble the colour of the brick-dust. It is called cattle-bird because it likes to move by the side of cattle when they are grazing in the field. When fresh feathers grow as a result of moulting they seem to be very graceful in appearance and as such are worn by the Indian princes on their turbans together with some jewel.

(9) মাছরাঙ্গা<sup>1</sup> (The white-browed fantail or *Phipidura albigfrontata*):—

These birds have got very strong bills which are also broad and flat. They catch flies and fish and usually live by the marshes. When it comes down, it outspreads its tail into a fan and dances very elegantly. It has a loud but sweet note. Its nesting time is the summer or the rainy season.

(10) চক্রবাক or চকা<sup>2</sup> (Ruddy Sheldrake or Brahminy Duck—*Casarca rutila*):—

The brahminy ducks live in pairs and among each pair great attachment exists for each other. Poets of our

<sup>1</sup> The bird fantail swoops down to catch fish. Thus,

উড়িয়া পড়িয়া মৎস্য ধরে মাছরাঙ্গা।

—কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী, বঙ্গবাসী, পৃ: ৬৩।

(The fantail bird catches fish by swooping down upon its prey.)

The fondness of this bird for fish is evident from its very name. The following line supports it. Thus :

মাছরাঙ্গা সদাই উড়ে মুখে বার মাছ।

—ধর্ম্মরাজের গীত, রূপরাম

For মাছরাঙ্গা, see also আরণ্যকাণ্ড, কৃত্তিবাসী রামায়ণ, C. U. MS. No. 43, Fol. 26.

<sup>2</sup> See a Pada by Govinda Dāsa, Padakalpataru, p. 769.

See also the Chapṛī-Kāvya by Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukundarām (Baṅgabāsi edition), p. 63.

country are never tired of describing the liking of these birds for each other. It is believed that the pair lives together during the daytime but remains separate at night on the two banks of a river, where separation causes them to utter plaintive note. This is a mere tradition not supported by facts. According to some, the pair always live together <sup>1</sup> “except when they live on the banks of very narrow rivers.”

(11) চাতক or টিটিপক্ষী <sup>2</sup> (*Aegithina tiphia*):—

The bird চাতক is described as looking up to the clouds for a drop of rain.<sup>3</sup> No such trait of the bird is yet known. But that the bird *Aegithina tiphia* loves to catch water-drops from the rains is a known fact. Therefore it may be that this bird is identified with the bird চাতক. According to many the bird *Coccyzus melanoleucus* is identical with চাতক; but it is not true. The bird চাতক breeds in the rainy season. Its note may be heard during the hot month of Chaitra (March-April).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See “Game birds of India, Burma and Ceylon,” Vol. III, p. 129, by Hume and Marshall.

<sup>2</sup> See a Pada by Jñānadās, p. 381, Padakalpataru.

<sup>3</sup> (a) ভকত চাতক নীল নীরদ, অধিক পূরণ আশ ।

—রাধামোহন, পদকল্পতরু, পৃ: ৭১৮ ।

(As the bird চাতক wistfully looks unto the black cloud for a drop of rain, so the devotee looks unto the object of his worship with deep devotion.)

(b) চাতক চাতকী জল যাদে ঘন ঘন ।

—কবিকল্প-চণ্ডী, বঙ্গবাসী, পৃ: ৬৩ ।

(Both the male and female চাতক direly needed water.)

(c) See a Pada by Govinda Dāsa, Pada No. 1733, p. 514, Padakalpataru.

<sup>4</sup> চৈত্রে চাতক-পক্ষ পিউ পিউ ডাকে ।

—পদকল্পতরু, পৃ: ৫২১ ।

(In the hot month of Chaitra, the bird চাতক gives out a plaintive note for rain-water.)

(12) চকোর<sup>1</sup> (*Caccabis chucar*) and তিস্তির<sup>2</sup> (*Francoline partridge*) :—

The bird চকোর belongs to the class of partridge. Its eyelids are very red<sup>3</sup> and eyes of the colour of orange. This bird is very common in Bengal. According to the poetic tradition of the country this bird drinks moon-light for its sustenance. Among other birds of the partridge class may be mentioned তিস্তির or the *Francoline partridge* otherwise known as the sandpipes or the lapwing. The sandpipers are of various types. A sandpiper resembles the mynah in size but possesses no tail like it. Its legs are also longer and the greater part of the plumage is of a muddy colour. The sandpiper remains in the plains of India during the cold weather and fly to Kashmir during the summer. There is another kind of lapwing which is called “Did-you-do-it” by the English. Its bill is red and contains in front of the eyes a large lump of skin. This bird is known as the হিরামণ<sup>4</sup> bird. There is yet another kind of this bird whose eyes contain the wattle of yellow colour and is known as the শিলামণ bird. Both kinds of birds catch insects in the fields. These birds lay four eggs in a shallow hole made in the ground during the hot weather. Two other partridges deserve notice. One is called Grey Partridge and another the Black Partridge.

<sup>1</sup> & <sup>2</sup> See Kavikañkaṇ-Chaṇḍī (Baṅgabāsi), p. 63.

<sup>3</sup>

ছনমান অরুণ

কমল-দল গঞ্জন

খঞ্জন জিনিয়া চকোর।

—রাশানন্দ, পদকল্পতরু, পৃঃ ৬৩৩।

(The eyes were more red than the red lotus-petals, the eyes of the bird Khañjana, and the eyes of the bird Chakora.)

<sup>4</sup> See collection of Folk Literature by D. R. Majumdar, e. g., ঠাকুরমার ঝুলি and ঠাকুরদাদার ঝুলি. A kind of fine sāḍī also bore the name of the bird হিরামণ. See Mymensingh Ballads, ed. by D. C. Sen.

These have got a fine plumage. The call of partridge is much liked by all and it is very fond of its master. Moreover its cock is a great fighter which attracts men to keep this bird.

(13) (a) কোকিল<sup>1</sup> (*Eudynamis honorata*):—

The cuckoo belongs to the Cuculinæ family of birds, or more properly to the family of Phoenicoptainæ which is a branch of the Cuculinæ family. The species of cuckoo that frequents our country is the koel or *Eudynamis honorata* and belongs to the species of Phoenicophainæ. The koel like all other birds of the Cuculinæ family hatches its eggs in the nests of other birds with the latter's help. The পাঁপিয়া, বৌ-কথা-কণ্ড and some other birds belong to the Cuculinæ family and are well known for their instinct in hatching their eggs in other birds' nests. But the birds of Phoenicophainæ family are not known to possess this propensity save and except the koel who belongs to this group. It is very peculiar that the birds with such instinct as that of the koel often keep their eggs in the nests of very small birds whose eggs are naturally smaller than those kept with them. The pretty big eggs of the Cuculinæ birds are even found mixed up with the very small eggs of the birds called টুনটুনি (*Orthotomus sutorius*). Similarly the eggs of the bird পাঁপিয়া are kept in the nest of the tiny bird known as the ছাতারে (Jungle Babblers). How these eggs are kept in the nests of other birds is an interesting study. The koel usually puts its eggs, which are evidently smaller, in the nest of the crow. When the koel does so, the male koel

<sup>1</sup> See

গৃধিনী ও পেচকের কলহ, উত্তরাকাণ্ড, কৃত্তিবাসী রামায়ণ ।

See

ধর্মরাজের গীত, রূপরাম, “নয়ানীর সাজসজ্জা” ।

usually decoy the female crow from its nest and the female koel seizes this opportunity of keeping its eggs amidst those of the crow. There is no love lost between the two kinds of birds and the crow always attacks the koel whenever it meets the latter bird, still, fully knowing that the eggs are not its own, it hatches them and even nurses them when they are very young.<sup>1</sup>

It rather happens that the young cuckoo sometimes injures the eggs of the crow without any sense of gratitude. Why the Cuculinae birds do not hatch their own eggs and entrust this duty even to birds who are their avowed enemies, is a biological curiosity. The koel lives on fruits. It is never known to take insects or other creatures as food. The koel, unlike the British cuckoo, is not a migratory bird. Throughout the greater part of the year it remains studiously silent among the thick foliage of trees, being scarcely seen. But during the spring it moves about with gay spirit uttering a very melodious note.<sup>2</sup> That is the reason why the bird is so much associated with spring and specially by the poets of our country. It is peculiar that the male bird utters this mellow note and not the female bird. The koel is very noisy during the breeding season.

<sup>1</sup> A name of কোকিল is পরভূত. This name is given to the cuckoo because of its hatching and growth in the nests of other birds, e.g., the crow.

Thus,—

পরভূতকে ডর পায়স লৈহ কর

বায়স নিয়ড়ে ফুকানি ।

—বিজাপতি, পদকল্পতরু, পৃঃ ৫৫০ ।

2

বসন্তে কোকিল সব ডাকে কুহ কুহ ।

—পদকল্পতরু, পদসংখ্যা ১৭৭৯ ।

The cuckoo sometimes acted as messengers.

See কোকিলসংবাদ, কবিত্তর, C. U. MSS. No. 884, Fol. 2.

(b) পাঁপিয়া (Brain-fever bird)—<sup>1</sup>

We have already referred to the bird Pāpiyā or the Brain-fever bird, otherwise also known as the Hawk-cuckoo (*Hierococcyse vains*). Another kind of this bird is known as the Kālā-pāpiyā or the Pied-crested cuckoo (*Coccyzus jacobinus*). The bird পাঁপিয়া belongs to the class cuckoo. This bird has got the size of a Śikrā and closely resembles the latter bird. The call of the bird sounds like 'Pāpiyā' for which it is so called. The bird rarely touches ground and lives on insects, figs and fruits. The Kālā-pāpiyā is a good-looking bird. The Pāpiyā lays its eggs in the nest of the seven sisters (or the Jungle Babblers)<sup>2</sup> which is a very curious fact as the latter bird is decidedly smaller than the former bird, i.e., the Pāpiyā.

(14) কাক<sup>3</sup> (Crow):—

There are two kinds of crows, one of which is bigger and another smaller. Besides, crows of many other species such as the *Corvus insolens* (or the Burmese crow), Bhuchangās, etc., are also known. The bigger crow

<sup>1</sup> পাঁপিয়া পাখিয় পি়াসে পীড়িত, সতত পিউ পিউ রাবিয়া ।

—পদকল্পতরু, পদসংখ্যা ১৮০৬, পৃ: ৫৩১ ।

(The bird Pāpiyā always gives out the sound of 'piu, piu,' being exceedingly thirsty.)

See also

পাঁপিয়া দারুণ পিউ পিউ সেউরণ ।

—বিজ্ঞাপতি, পদসংখ্যা ১৭৩২, পদকল্পতরু ।

(The cruel bird Pāpiyā utters 'piu, piu' raising pangs of love in the listeners.)

See also a pada by বরভদ্রাস, পদকল্পতরু, পৃ: ২৩৩.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. The affinity in the name current in Tipperah side, e.g., আঁড়া-কেচকেচাণি (আঁরা—bush or jungle, কেচকেচাণি—babbler).

<sup>3</sup> See কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী, p. 63 (Baṅgabāsī edition).

See also ধর্মরাজের গীত by Rūparām.

N. B.—For a tradition about the misfortune of the crows for having one eye, see কুন্তিবাসী রামায়ণ (অযোধ্যাকাণ্ড), ed. by D. C. Sen., pp. 127-128.

দেবরূপী বিহঙ্গম লেখা যেতকাক (কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী, বঙ্গবাসী), পৃ: ৬৩. There was painted the divine bird, the white crow.



(দাঁড়কাক) or the *Corvus macrorhynchus* is also known as the Corby, Raven or the Jackdaw. The smaller crow (পাতিকাক) or the *Corvus splendens* possesses a gray neck. Both kinds of birds are jet-black in appearance. The plumage of the bigger crow or corby is rather more glossy than the smaller crow. Both the corby and the common crow live side by side and are common sight in the villages and towns. But the latter is more annoying to the people, for they are always on the lookout to steal all eatables that they may find in a house. The crows are very fond of sucking the honey from the red flowers of the silk-cotton tree (Simul tree). Crows live together in crowds in a clump of trees and rise up very early when they are prone to call aloud before they separate for the day. Even during their roosting time they give out a loud sound. The nest of corby is peculiar. It contains hair by way of lining. Crows are in the habit of stealing and eating the eggs of other birds, but they are very careful about their own eggs. Still the koel cheats them in a very peculiar way. The crows usually lay three to five eggs.

There is a kind of crow called the king-crow or the Bhuchangā (*Dicrurus ater*). This bird feeds on insects and is very fond of perching on the backs of the cattle when they graze in the fields. Its noise may be heard just before the dawn. While this bird chooses its mate it is very noisy. The bird has a long tail. The king-crow is a great fighter during the nesting season, but otherwise it is not very fond of fighting. Though the ordinary king-crow is very black in colour, there is a species which has a white breast.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Manasāmaṅgal by Ketakādās,—

শ্বেতকাক ঘন ডাকে বিপরীত বাণী ।

(The white crows utter very inauspicious cry.)

N. B.—White crows may generally mean ভুলা as all-white crows are not to be found although some believe that white crows have been found in Australia.

(15) ময়ূর (Peacock) <sup>1</sup> :—

Peacocks are of various kinds. Of these, the kind known as the *Pavo cristatus* is very well known in Bengal. The dance of the peacock, specially of the male one, is very remarkable. Usually the male peacock dances before its female companion with outspread fan.<sup>2</sup> The dance is often accompanied by loud screams. The sight of cloud in the sky makes the peacock very gay.<sup>3</sup> The bird feeds on grain, buds, insects and even on snake. The Peacock-feathers are used to decorate the head and ears of the images of the Hindu gods and goddesses as referred to in the Meghadūta. These are much used by our people for decorative purposes. This bird is much venerated in various parts of India, and are, therefore, never killed for its feathers.

(16) খঞ্জন <sup>4</sup> (Wagtail) :—

The bird wagtail is very fond of living near water.<sup>5</sup> It has a very sweet sing-song voice. Its nesting time is from March to May. The wagtail is a migratory bird and comes

<sup>1</sup> See গৃধ্রী ও পেচকের বিবাদ, কৃত্তিবাসী রামায়ণ, উত্তরাকাণ্ড।

<sup>2</sup> ফেকনা ধরিয়া নাচে ময়ূর ময়ূরী।

(The male and female peacocks dance with their outspread train.)

Also, ময়ূর নাচত মাতিয়া (the peacocks dance madly).

—বিজ্ঞাপতি, পদসংখ্যা ১৭৩৭, পদকল্পতরু, পৃঃ ৫১০।

<sup>3</sup> গগনে গরজে ঘন ফুকে ময়ূর।

—বিজ্ঞাপতি, পদকল্পতরু, পদসংখ্যা ১৭৩৪, পৃঃ ৫১৪।

(There was the deep sound of the clouds and the peacocks began to utter their shrill note.) See also Vidyāpati, p. 426, Padakalpataru.

<sup>4</sup> See ধর্মরাজের গীত by রূপরায়.

<sup>5</sup> See also কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী, বঙ্গবাসী, পৃঃ ৬৩—

উড়িয়া কমলে বৈসে খঞ্জনী খঞ্জন।

(The wagtails, both male and female, fly and sit upon the lotuses.)

to our country during the winter from over the Himalayas. This bird lives on insects and often lives together in large numbers. The bird is credited with good eyes<sup>1</sup> and dancing propensity by our poets.<sup>2</sup>

(17) পেচক<sup>৪</sup> (Owl) :—

The owl (which is of several kinds) is noted for its peculiar habits. Most of the birds pass the day in search of their food and pass the night in sleep. But the owl does the reverse, as it sleeps in some hole during the whole day and keeps itself awake throughout the night in search of prey. It is a bird of prey and feeds on lizards, small birds, etc. The owl has got large ears unlike other birds and can hear well. The owl usually swallows its victims in entirety and nothing remains behind, not even the hair and feather, which it afterwards disgorges.

(18) চড়াই<sup>৪</sup> (Sparrow) :—

Sparrows are common sights in every household. They are tiny birds living on grains, caterpillars and injurious insects. These birds build nests on the roofs of houses only for their eggs and young ones. As soon as a sparrow grows old, it leaves its nest. It is in the habit of roosting on trees

<sup>1</sup> The bird is noted for its fine reddish eyes. The poets always compare good looks with those of Khañjan (wagtail). See a pada by বাহু ঘোষ, p. 630, Pada-kalpatañu. See also a pada by রামানন্দ, p. 633, Pada-kalpatañu.

<sup>2</sup> See পদকল্পতরু, পৃ: ৪২৯—

চঞ্চলগতি খঞ্জন তিতি নৃত্যতি অতি ভঙ্গে ।

—শিবরাম (৭)।

<sup>3</sup>

কদম্ব কোটরে বস্তা মাথা নাড়ে পেঁচা ।

—ধর্মরাজের গীত, রূপরাম ।

(Sitting in the cavity of the Kadamba tree the owl was shaking its head.)

<sup>4</sup> See কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী (বঙ্গবাসী), পৃ: ৬৩. See ধর্মরাজের গীত, রূপরাম.

in large numbers. Sparrows do not like to roost in one place for a long time.

B. *The Aviary.*

It seems the Bengalis took much care in making cages. In the *Chañḍī-Kāvya* of Kavikaṇkaṇ we find the Rājā of Ujāni (in West Bengal) was anxious to have a suitable golden cage for his birds 'Suka' and 'Sāri' which talked like wise men. To attain his object, so the story goes, he sent the merchant Dhanapati to the Rāja of Gauda (in North Bengal) which was famous for artistic workmanship in making cages. Elaborate description of the way of building a cage possessing windows, stands, cups, plates, nets, jars, and festoons will be found in the following lines of Kavikaṇkaṇ's *Chañḍī-Kāvya* :—

<sup>1</sup> "The workman made a cage which was very beautiful

|                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| গড়ে কারিগর           | সুবর্ণ পিঞ্জর,   |
| দেখিতে অতি মনোহর ।    |                  |
| কুন্ত সারি সারি,      | অতি মনোহারী      |
| গড়ে চতুঃশালা ঘর ॥    |                  |
| জালি ছতাশন,           | আউটে কাঞ্চন,     |
| চারিভিতে স্বর্ণঝাড় । |                  |
| স্বর্ণময় ঘর,         | দেখিতে সুন্দর,   |
| পক্ষী বসিবার আড় ॥    |                  |
| তাতে স্বর্ণকাটি,      | বর্ণ দিম্বামোটি, |
| চৌদিকে স্বর্ণের জাল । |                  |
| স্বর্ণজাল বাটি,       | অতি পরিপাটি,     |
| স্বর্ণের গড়িল থাল ॥  |                  |
| স্বর্ণের কলস          | দেখিতে রূপস      |
| বিচিত্র পতাকা উড়ে ।  |                  |
| স্বর্ণের কপাট,        | অতি বড় আট,      |
| আপন ইচ্ছায় গড়ে ॥    |                  |

to look at. It was a foursided one with rows of jars on its roof. He tempered gold by fire and fitted it on the four sides of the cage. Not only the main cage was of gold, but the stand for the bird and the rods used in the cage as well. The drinking cups and plates were also made of the same metal. Festoons of variegated colour fluttered over the gold vases that were placed on the roof of the cage. Inside the cage, the door of which was also made of gold, the small gold bells which were fitted to the feet of the bird 'Śuka' gave out a sweet jingling sound. The whole cage looked bright with its yellow colour and shone like the chariot of the Sun-god. The cage was called 'Viśvambhara.'

—Kavikaṅkaṇ's Chaṇḍī-Kāvya, p. 151.

It is worthy to note that the Bengalis used to make picturesque homes for their pet birds. The shape of a cage is a special point to note. In the above illustration, we find it was not round but foursided. The Western ornithologists prefer the latter type of cage to the former, as a round cage is not good for the free movement of the birds and is not therefore congenial to their health. They are also

স্বৰ্ণ নূপুৰ,                      গঢ়েন প্রচুৰ,

চৌদিকে ঝম ঝম বাজে ।

অৰুণ বরণ                      ভুবন ঘোহন,

যেন রবিরথ সাজে ॥

গড়িল পিঞ্জর                      নামে বিশ্বস্তর,

নিল রাজসন্নিধানে ।

দেবতা নির্মাণ,                      অতি অল্পায়,

তাহে দিল চক্ষুদানে ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী, পৃ: ১৫১ ( বদবাসী ) ।

very particular about the stands, cups and plates. Two kinds of confines are usually made for the birds. One is the common cage and the other is the enclosed space, pretty big, for the convenience of birds of various classes. The latter is particularly known as the aviary, though the former when big, also goes by the same name. The aviary contains tanks and trees for the use of the birds. Sometimes birds are kept in the enclosed verandahs of a building to suit the convenience of the owner.<sup>1</sup>

A branch of the Yogi class is known to have migrated from Bengal to Orissa and is understood to carry there the traditions of the Pāla kings of Bengal. Thus in the Oriya version of the Maynāmatī songs commonly known as the “Govinda Chandrer Gīt,” sung by those Yogis, is found incidentally a long list of birds and their aviary. The aviary here is described as such :—

“In many fine *pucca* rooms the pigeons and other birds were kept.”<sup>2</sup> Again,

“The big birds were kept in suitable cages. The king himself took care to feed them. Milk, rice, fish and meat were supplied to them and a hundred families were engaged by the king for their care.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See পাখীর কথা, by S. Law, pp. 19-20. References to the making of artistic and valuable cages are to be found in Kādambarī and other Sanskrit works.

<sup>2</sup>

যেলা কোঠাঘর মান অতি বিতপন ।

স এৰ কপুতা আদি নানা রত্ন মান ॥

—গোবিন্দচন্দ্রের গীত ।

<sup>3</sup>

ধাড়ী ধাড়ী পঞ্জরী ভিতরে থুকে থাক্তি ।

তে যহিং কিরাজন দে আহাৰ উকতি ॥

দুধভাত মাছ মাংস কপতকে খাই ।

বেণী শত পরিবারে ইহাকু যোগাই ॥

—গোবিন্দচন্দ্রের গীত ।

### C. *Methods of catching birds :—*

There are various methods <sup>1</sup> of catching birds. These are on the whole current even now. We notice a few of these below :

(a) Catching of birds with সাতনলা <sup>2</sup> (*sātnalā lit.* seven pieces of reeds) :—

In this method the fowler uses seven (or more according to necessity) bamboo pieces to catch certain birds such as the parrots and the mynahs. The man carries a tame female bird in a cage to decoy other birds of the same species. Being attracted by the voice of the tame bird another parrot comes by its side and enters the cage which is placed on a tree by the fowler with the help of his bamboo pieces joined together. The door of the cage suddenly closes and the fowler, who so long remained concealed in the bush, makes his appearance and brings down the cage with the new bird secured in it. Sometimes the fowler takes with him some gum and applies it to a wing of the wild bird by some manœuvre. In this way birds are caught. In rare cases birds are pierced through with a rod, one end of which is fitted with a sharp point.

<sup>1</sup> For various methods of catching birds, see Mukundarām Kavikaṅkaṇ's *Chañḍī-Kāvya*, pp. 125-126 (Baṅgabāsi ed.).

2

বামকরে পাতালতায় পাতে নানাছলা ।

আটাফান্দিয়াত চালায় সাতনলা ।

পাথে আটা দিয়া ব্যাধ করে নানা ফন্দি ।

উড়িয়া পালায় শুক সারী হৈল বন্দী ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী, পৃঃ ১২৬ ।

“An ambush was prepared with the help of leaves and creepers. With the help of gum the fowler used his ‘Sātnalā.’ The wings of the bird Sārī was caught by the gum cleverly managed by the fowler, while the bird Suka flew away.”

—Kavikaṅkaṇ's *Chañḍī-Kāvya*, p. 126 (Baṅgabāsi ed.).

## (b) Catching of Kuḍās (Ospreys) :—

The most interesting mode of catching the bird that obtains in the countryside is in connection with the bird Kuḍā (a kind of Osprey). This bird is caught with the help of a bird of the same species. In East Bengal and specially in the district of Mymensingh, the catching of these birds was not only a very lucrative profession but also a matter of interest even to the wealthy who often participated in it. It is not the practice to tame a wild Kuḍā for catching other wild Kuḍās. Usually eggs of Kuḍās are collected for the purpose. The eggs are hatched by these birds during the rains in the marshy paddy fields wherein they build their nests. Just after coming out of the shell, these become so strong that they dive at pleasure in the swamps full of water. It is not easy to catch them at this stage, so eggs are only collected. These eggs are hatched in a very curious and artificial way. The eggs are enveloped in cotton and are kept attached to the stomach of a man with the help of a piece of cloth. The heat of the stomach and cotton helps the hatching of the eggs. When hatched in this manner, the young ones become very tame and help in catching other Kuḍās. The fowler takes the tame Kuḍā in a cage and frequents marshy lands in search of wild Kuḍās. The tame Kuḍā being let free decoys a wild Kuḍā when the former hears the sound of the latter, and brings it near enough to be caught by the fowler. Practically the tame Kuḍā seizes the wild Kuḍā by the neck and keeps it in that condition till it is caught by the fowler. In the Mymensingh Ballads we get many references of the catching of these birds.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> (a) ডাইন হাতে হাইরা পিজরা বাম হাতে কোড়া ।

ডুগ্‌হীরা কালে বিনোদ পছে দিল মেলা ॥

—মৈমনসিংহ-গাথিকা, ১ম খণ্ড, মল্লীয়া, পৃ: ৮৯ ।



## (c) Catching of the bird Doyel (a kind of Robin) :—

The young Doyel bird is taken from its nest and is tamed. When it grows old it helps its master to catch other birds of its kind. The owner of the tame bird lets it free from its cage in quest of a wild bird. The tame bird in course of its flight catches a wild Doyel when such an opportunity occurs. A fight naturally ensues and both in their struggle fall to the ground upon a piece of cloth already spread out for the purpose by the fowler, who then catches the bird with the help of this cloth.

## (d) Netting of birds :—

The usual method for a fowler is to take a net with him and fix it on a tree. One end of it remains at the hand of the man with the help of a long piece of thread. The whole thing is contrived in such a manner that the fowler may let the net fall to the ground any moment he desires. On the ground just beneath the net some grains

(Chānd Binod took the cage in his right hand and the bird Kuḍā on his left and started from his home for catching this species of birds, at noon.)

—Mym. Ballads, Maluā (Bengali, p. 89).

(b) হেথা হতে চলে বিনোদ বইনেরে কহিয়া ।  
 গহিন কাননে গেল কোড়া হাতে লইয়া ॥  
 দুর্কী-ক্ষেত্রের মধ্যে বিনোদ কোড়া হালা দিল ।  
 হাইরা পিজরা হাতে লইয়া কোড়ারে ছাড়িল ॥  
 কোড়া না ছাড়িয়া বিনোদ কোন্ কাম করিল ।  
 বন ছোবার আড়ালে বিনোদ আসিয়া বসিল ॥

মৈমনসিংহ-গীতিকা, বলুয়া, পৃঃ ৮৯ ।

(After taking farewell from his sister Chānd Binod started for the dense forest with a Kuḍā in his hand. There he let loose his Kuḍā from its cage and lay in waiting for any wild Kuḍā behind a bush.)

—Maluā, p. 89, Mym. Ballads (Bengali), Vol. I.

of paddy are scattered for the birds.<sup>1</sup> When the whole arrangement becomes complete the fowler keeps himself concealed behind some tree with one end of thread within his grasp and the other attached to a corner of the net as mentioned before. No sooner the birds come and begin to eat the grains than the fowler causes the net to fall upon them and they are instantly caught. The nets were once made from the hair of the horses' tail<sup>1</sup> as we find in the old Bengali literature.

D. *Popular beliefs and superstitions as regards birds :—*

Though men have been keeping birds from time immemorial and have been evincing great interest and love for them, still various superstitions have grown among the people of Bengal, which sometimes associate them with evil luck. How these have arisen we do not know. But this much is certain that their superstition has the sanctity of the *Sāstras*. Thus :—

2 "The following birds when sit upon the roof of any house are said to ruin the owner. These are the vulture,

<sup>১</sup> ভীজিত তপ্তল সনে, কাননে কলাই বুন,  
রহে ব্যাধ ঝোড়ের আহড়ে ।  
লুক্ক ডক্ষণ আসে, বাঁকে পাখী জালে বৈসে,  
নানা বিহঙ্গম বন্দি পড়ে ॥—কবিকঙ্কণ-চণ্ডী, পৃঃ ১২৫।

(Fried paddy and beans were spread on the ground by the fowler who kept himself concealed near by. As soon as the birds were attracted there to eat them, they were caught in the net.)

—Kavikāṇḍa-Charḍī, p. 125.

হয়-পুচ্ছ লোম ফান্দে, শত শত পক্ষী বান্ধে ।

—କବିକବ୍ଧ-ଚଣ୍ଡୀ, ପୃ: ୧୨୬ ।

(Hundreds of birds were caught in the net made of the hair of horses' tail.)

—Kavikaṅkaṇ-Chandī, p. 126.

২ গৃধ্রঃ ককঃ কপোতশ্চ উলুকঃ শ্বেন এব চ ।

চিল্লশ্চ চন্ম্‌চিল্লশ্চ ভাসঃ পাণ্ডুর এব চ ॥

the *Ardea manillensis*, the dove, the owl, the hawk, the kite, the bat and the white waterhen. It is believed that either within a fortnight, or within a month, or within a year—the owner of the house, or his wife, or his son will lose his or her life and wealth. To save oneself from such a dire calamity either the house or its value is to be given away to a Brahmin. Again, if a vulture, a crow, a dog or a jackal brings a piece of flesh or bone from a cremation ground to any town or throw such a thing into any house, then the place where it is so done turns into a cremation ground (*i.e.*, pestilence occurs in the locality as its result).”—*Matsyapurāṇa*.

<sup>1</sup> “If any one hears the note of a crow only once it is a very bad omen, as it will bring sorrow to the hearer. If any

গৃহে যন্ত পতন্ত্যেতে গেহং তন্ত বিপত্ততে ।  
 পক্ষান্নাসত্তথা বর্ষান্মৃত্যুঃ শ্রাদ্ গৃহমেধিনঃ ॥  
 পত্ন্যাঃ পুত্রস্ত বা মৃত্যুর্দ্ব্যেক্যপি বিনশ্রুতি ।  
 ব্রাহ্মণায় গৃহং দত্ত্বা দত্ত্বা তন্মূল্যমেব বা ।  
 গৃহীয়াৎ যদি রোচেত শান্তিক্ষেমাং প্রয়োজয়েৎ ॥  
 মাংসাহীনি সমাদায় শ্মশানাদ্ গৃধ্রায়সাঃ ।  
 শৃগালোহথবা মধ্য পুরস্ত প্রবিশস্তি চেৎ ।  
 বিকিরন্তি গৃহাদৌ চ শ্মশানং সা মহী ভবেৎ ॥

—মৎস্যপুরাণ ।

As the above birds are believed to be inauspicious under certain circumstances so the birds শঙ্খচিল and ধ্বজন are auspicious during the beginning of a journey. But ডোমচিল is inauspicious as mentioned before.

<sup>1</sup> কাকশৈকরবশ্রাবঃ প্রভাতে হুঃখদায়কঃ ।  
 কাকো মৈথুনকাসক্তঃ খেতো বা যদি দৃশ্যতে ॥  
 উলুকো বসতে যত্র নিপত্তেদা তথা গৃহে ।  
 জ্ঞেয়ো গৃহপতেম্ ত্যুর্ধননাশস্তথৈব চ ॥

—জ্যোতিষস্বত্ম ।

householder sees the pairing of crows, or sees a crow of white colour, or sees an owl falling upon his house or sitting upon it, then his loss of wealth and even death is imminent. Under the circumstances, the sufferer should perform proper ceremonies to ward off the evil.”

—Jyotistattva.

There are many works in Sanskrit which deal with these omens and which are known to almost every household of Bengal even to this day. Beside the above we also know that the pigeons when build their nests in a house are taken as a sign of good luck. It is generally believed that the pigeons do never live in a house which is unlucky. It is peculiar that the dove (ঘুঘু) though belongs to the same family, on the other hand, is known as ‘গৃহনাশন’, ‘ভীষণ’, ‘অগ্নিসহায়’, ‘দহন’, etc.<sup>1</sup> There is a work on the omens in Sanskrit which is called *কাকচরিত্র*. It takes into account all the notes of the crow and describes at length its significance in connection with the fates of men. Even the Thugs, a class of dangerous robbers of the 18th

খেতকাক ঘন ডাকে বিপরীত বাণী !

তাহারে আরতি করে বেহলা নাচনী ॥

—কেতকাদাসের মনসামঙ্গল !

(The ominous sound of the white crow uttered repeatedly made Behulā, the expert dancer, nervous, for which she prayed unto the bird.)

কেন রাম হয় হস্ত লোচন স্থল্লর ।

বামদিকে করিতেছে খঞ্জন গমন ॥

বিষম কুশরবন দেখি করি ভয় ।

নানা অমঙ্গল দেখি না জানি কি হয় ॥

—কৃত্তিবাসী রামায়ণ, অরণ্যকাণ্ড (D. C. Sen's ed.), p. 177.

(O Rama, why do my hands and eyes quake, why does the bird Khañjana wagtail go by our left side? I am afraid of the vast Kusa forest. We are witnessing many bad omens. Fate knows what is in store for us.)

<sup>1</sup> See পাখীর কথা (লাহা), পৃ: ১৫৭।

century in India, believed very strongly in these omens when going out for strangling men and thought particularly auspicious the sound of an owl.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen birds are liked and sought for, both from the standpoint of utility as well as pleasure. Birds help men to kill many injurious reptiles and insects, to catch the desired prey and to carry messages from one place to another. In the jungles of Eastern Bengal which become inaccessible to people during the rains, it is with the help of some trained birds that messages are sent. Birds are sometimes believed to indicate good and bad omens in regard to human destiny. Beside all these there is an æsthetic side which can never be overlooked. It is said that the rudimentary notes<sup>2</sup> of the Hindu music have its origin partly in the sounds of birds. Among the seven notes, no less than four are taken from the birds and the rest from the beasts. The birds are the peacock, the Chātaka (*Aegithina tiphia*), Crauñcha (Pond-heron) and the Koel (*Eudynamis honorata*). According to some these birds are three in number and then the bird Chātaka is

<sup>1</sup> See Confessions of Ameer Ali, the Thug, p. 29, by Colonel Meadows Taylor.

<sup>2</sup> সপ্তস্বর রূপ জান সাহ্য ধ্বনি যতে ।

শিখী কহে ষড়্জ স্বর বিখ্যাত জগতে ॥

চাতক ঋষভ হয় ছাগ গাংকার ।

ক্রৌঞ্চ মধ্যমাখ্যা পিক পঞ্চম প্রকার ॥

ভেক ধৈবত হস্তী নিবাদ স্বর কয় ।

স্বররূপ এঁছে কেহো অন্তমত কয় ॥

—ভক্তিরসাকর (নরহরি চক্রবর্তী), পঞ্চম তরঙ্গ, পৃ: ৩৪৩ ।

দামোদরস্তু ।—

ময়ূর-বৃষভচ্ছাগ-ক্রৌঞ্চ-কোকিল-বাজিন: ।

যাতঙ্গ্য ক্রমেণাহ স্বরানেনান্ সুহর্গমান্ ইতি ॥

—ভক্তিরসাকর (নরহরি চক্রবর্তী), পঞ্চম তরঙ্গ, পৃ: ৩৪৪-৩৪৫ ।

omitted from the list. Among the animals the elephant, the goat and the frog supply the ideal note, according to some, while according to others, the frog is omitted, and the horse and the bull are added to the list. Thus the lower animals, amongst which most prominently the birds, have played an important part in the æsthetic culture of men, helping them in the noted gradation of sounds in their higher music.



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## OPINIONS

1. **Dr. Sylvain Lévi.**—“ I have been simply delighted with your volumes of essays on the Bengali Society from old Bengali Literature. No book on modern history of India, as good as it may be, can compare with the picture you have given. You belong to a family where the power of emotion and poetical genius do not exclude accuracy of research or patience of erudition. From materials collected with an untiring industry, you have built up something living, and full of life indeed. Years ago, I could see from your informations on ships and sea-trade, so kindly compiled on my request, that your place was among the best-gifted young scholars of India. I can assure you that I use constantly to refer to your papers, whenever I do not happen to find exactly the information I am hunting for. I come across facts and dates which prove important in some other lines. That your example may inspire a team of young workers who would do for the whole of India what you have so happily done for Bengal, then a real history of modern India can be written : instead of local or imperial chronicles centering around rajas and padishahs, we shall get an image of Indian people, Indian life, Indian activity. Your charming chapter on birds comes as a lovely conclusion; you have not to apologise for it, but we have to thank you for this valuable addition.

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**4. Luzac's Oriental List and Book Review, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2, April-June, 1927.**—"The author of this work was appointed, in 1921, Research Assistant to Dr. Dineschandra Sen and was allotted the task of collecting data of social life in Bengal from the old literature of that country. The present volume contains the main results of his labours arranged in chapters according to subjects. It embraces a wide range of topics. Ship-building, commerce, architecture, warfare, war-music, pastimes, clothes, ornaments and cooking, besides which there are some more general chapters on manners and customs and Hindu-Moslem Unity. The latter containing some instructive instances of the tendency of the two faiths—now-a-days rather sadly at variance—to coalesce. We read of Brahmins consulting

the Koran to find out an auspicious day and of a Mahomedan poet dedicating his poems to Krishna. \* \* \* \*

The book is valuable as well as interesting. It contains a mass of carefully sorted out details never before made available with lists of technical words, articles of trade and the like which make it a most useful book of reference."

**5. The Modern Review, February, 1928.**—"The author who has given several years for his labours as a Research Worker in the Bengali Department of the University of Calcutta has produced this monograph on this special subject. He has patiently and faithfully collected the materials on eleven topics, and those who depend on and are in need of such materials will derive much benefit from the work under notice. \* \* \* \*"

**6. The Times Literary Supplement** noticed the work in its issue of Thursday, the 31st March, 1927, p. 235, and the **Journal of Indian History**, Vol. VI, Part I, April, 1927, similarly noticed it among select contents from Oriental Journals (p. 139).

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